

SOUTH AFRICA'S LEADING GAMING, COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

NAG



THE NEW KOTOR

MASS EFFECT WANTS
TO BLOW YOU AWAY

PC PLAYSTATION XBOX WII MOBILE

DON'T PLAY GAMES?

NAG'S FIELD GUIDE TO
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

ON THE RADAR

KANE & LYNCH, SUPER MARIO GALAXY,
COMMAND & CONQUER 3: KANE'S WRATH,
LEFT 4 DEAD, EYE OF JUDGEMENT AND MORE!

CALL OF DUTY 4

MODERN WARFARE

WWII IS SO LAST-GEN



WHO TOUCHED SASHA?

Team Fortress 2's
multiplayer Beta
rocks!



The DVD is part of backlogs. We deny its
very existence. Extract info from counter.

NAG is powered by



VOL 10 ISSUE 8 11.2007
SOUTH AFRICA R39.00





CG/2007/0076

PC
DVD
ROM



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

© 2007 Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision and Call of Duty are registered trademarks and Modern Warfare is a trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. This product contains software technology licensed from Id Software ("Id Technology"). Id Technology © 1999-2007 Id Software, Inc. "PlayStation", "PlayStation" and "PLAYSTATION" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. NINTENDO AND NINTENDO DS ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.

"THE MOST INTENSE
FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER EVER."

-GAME INFORMER MAGAZINE

"...ONE OF THE DEEPEST
ONLINE SHOOTERS OF ALL TIME."
-IGN

"THE MOST INTENSE AND CINEMATIC
ACTION EXPERIENCE EVER."

-TEAMXBOX

CALL^{OF} DUTY[®] 4

MODERN WARFARE[™]

Available November 9th

www.CallOfDuty.com

megarom
interactive

www.megarom.co.za

Tel: +27 11 361 4800

sales@megarom.co.za



ACTIVISION[®]

R249.90
Wii Classic Controller



R499.90
Wii Remote



discover

A NEW DIMENSION OF



R399.90



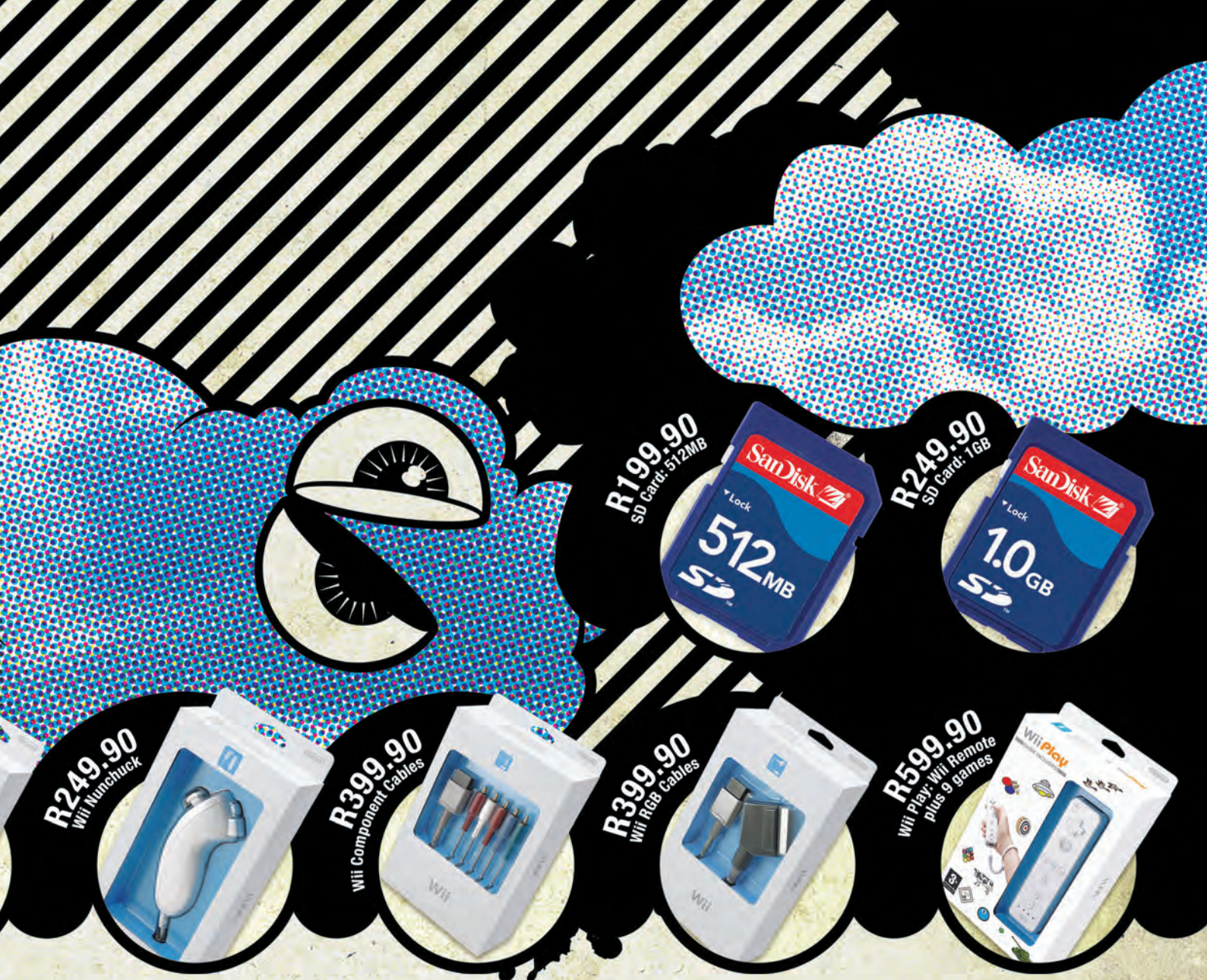
R399.90



R399.90

**LOADS MORE Wii GAMES
AVAILABLE IN-STORE NOW!**

TOYS R US



R249.90
Wii Nunchuck



R399.90
Wii Component Cables



R399.90
Wii RGB Cables



R599.90
Wii Play: Wii Remote plus 9 games



R199.90
SD Card: 512MB



R249.90
SD Card: 1GB



PLAY AT RZONE



R599.90



R399.90



R499.90

R2899.90
Wii Sport Pack Console,
Controller & 5 Games



EASTERN CAPE • Port Elizabeth (041) 368-7842 FREE STATE • Bloemfontein (051) 444-0380/96 GAUTENG • Atterbury (012) 991-4050
• Boksburg (011) 823-5111 • Centurion (012) 663-5453 • Fourways Crossing (011) 467-0708/9 • Heathway (011) 478-0027
• Maponya (011) 938-4117 • Park Meadows (011) 615-6614 • Sandton City (011) 783-0327 • Westgate (011) 768-4084
KWAZULU-NATAL • Gateway (031) 566-3772 • Pavilion (031) 265-0380 WESTERN CAPE • Bellville (021) 949-6030
• Canal Walk (021) 552-8001 • Green Point (021) 434-9085 • Somerset West (021) 851-4123 • Tokai (021) 712-6593



GRAB YOUR GEAR

Assorted PC Games



R129⁹⁵
The Sims 2
Teen Style Stuff Pack
(63090)



R349⁹⁵
Crysis (63091)



SIM City 5 Societies (63092), The Witcher (63056),
Empire Earth III (63032), Need For Speed, Pro Street (63093)



R299⁹⁵ EACH



R459⁹⁵
Unreal Tournament
2007 (63094)

Pyramat chairs are compatible with all gaming consoles, even PSP



Pyramat
Sound Booster
Chair (G Flex) (62794)

R649⁹⁵



Pyramat Sound
Rocker Chair (S2000)
(62795) • SELECTED STORES •

R1899⁹⁵



Pyramat Deluxe Sound
Rocker Chair (PM440)
(62792) • SELECTED STORES •

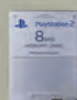
R2199⁹⁵

PlayStation®2



Silver Console (K Chassis)
Quarter of the size. Built-in modem
(55221)

R1599⁹⁵



8MB Silver
Memory Card
Essential for saving
games (55231)

R199⁹⁵



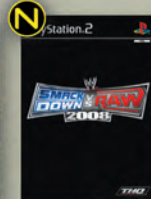
R279⁹⁵

Dual Shock Controller
Analogue control with pressure
sensitive action buttons and analogue
sticks. Built-in vibration function.
Compatible with all PS games.
Available in silver or black (55222)



R399⁹⁵ EACH

International Cricket Captain 3 (63195),
Need For Speed, Pro Street (63095)



R599⁹⁵ EACH

Sing Star R & B + Mics (63097),
WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2008 (63098)



PSP Slimline + SSX on Tour
Available in black or silver
(63080)

R2099⁹⁵ EACH



The Sims 2, Castaway (63101)
International Cricket Captain 3 (63103)



R449⁹⁵

WWE Smackdown VS
Raw 2008 (63104)

N These new games should be available during the month of November 2007. Release date is subject to change without prior notice from the supplier.



Elite Edition
The newest addition to the Xbox family that includes a huge 120GB hard drive. HDMI cable, with a premium black finish. Includes a black wireless controller & headset (62697)

R4599⁹⁵



R149⁹⁵
Black Rechargeable Battery Pack (62797)



R199⁹⁵
Black Play & Charge Kit (62798)



R449⁹⁵
Black Wireless Controller (62799)



FROM R599⁹⁵ EACH

Time Shift (63105), F.E.A.R. Files (63106), WWE Smackdown VS Raw 2008 (63107), Mass Effect (63108),



FROM R499⁹⁵ EACH

Army of Two (63110), Naruto (63111), Halo 3 (62784), Need for Speed, Pro Street (63112)

PLAYSTATION 3



PLAYSTATION®3 + Motor Storm + Sixaxis Controller + Resistance, Fall of Man
60GB storage capacity. Wireless motion sensor controller. 4 USB 2.0 ports Bluetooth 2.0. Supports Memory Stick, SD, CompactFlash & USB mass storage class devices. Blu-ray, DVD, CD & SACD disc media. Backwards compatible with all PS2 & PS1 games (62791)

R5699⁹⁵



Logitech R449⁹⁵
Precision Controller
Makes use of 2.4GHz Cordless Freedom™ technology. Delivers super-precise control from up to 10 metres away & for over 150 hours. 2 Year warranty (62351)



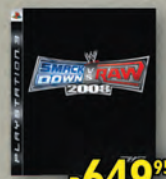
FROM R599⁹⁵ EACH

Medal of Honor, Airborne (63113), Army of Two (63114), L.A.I.R. (62801), Juiced 2 Hot Import Nights (63116), Need for Speed, Pro Street (63117)



Logitech HDMI Cable
► Experience the best possible sound and video from your PlayStation®3.► Logitech's® HDMI(tm) Audio Video Cable delivers high-definition video and digital audio through one cable, reducing wiring complexity. (64566)

R499⁹⁵



R649⁹⁵
WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2008 (63118)



R799⁹⁵
Sing Star Next Generation (62165)



R899⁹⁵
Eye of Judgement (63119)

Products are also available on order from www.incredible.co.za

Visit www.incredible.co.za for a full range of the latest graphics cards

• SELECTED STORES •
Canal Walk, Cresta, Gateway & Menlyn.

Offers valid until 30 November 2007

Incredible Call Centre 0860 011 700

Prices include 14% VAT. Prices stated herein are recommended retail and are subject to change. Credit approval is subject to the terms and conditions as stipulated on the application forms. All standard terms and conditions of Incredible Connection & suppliers herein apply. One year warranty on all hardware. E&OE.

Incredible
CONNECTION
www.incredible.co.za



needforspeed.com



© 2007 Electronic Arts Inc. EA, the EA logo and Need for Speed are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. All Rights Reserved. 'Nissan' and the logos, marks and designs of the NISSAN products are trademarks and/or intellectual property rights of NISSAN MOTOR CO., LTD. and used under license to Electronic Arts Inc. Toyota, Supra, Corolla associated symbols, emblems and designs are intellectual property of Toyota Motor Corporation and used with permission. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. NINTENDO DS, Wii AND THE Wii LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



EVERY SHIFT

EVERY GLORY

EVERY KISS

EVERY CALIPER

EVERY SURFACE

NEED FOR SPEED
PROSTREET

EA www.ea.co.za

the names,
la and
emarks
emarks



PlayStation 2

PLAYSTATION 3

PSP

Wii

PC DVD ROM

XBOX 360



REGULARS

- 12 Ed's Note
- 14 Inbox
- 18 Bytes
- 30 Calendar
- 100 Mobile Games
- 108 Name That Game
- 136 Multiplayer - News
- 142 Game.Dev
- 146 Lifestyle - Movies
- 154 Lifestyle - Comics
- 156 Lifestyle - Figurines
- 160 Subscriptions
- 162 Game Over

COLUMNS

- 36 Opinion - Miktar's Meanderings
- 38 Opinion - The Domain of The_Basilisk
- 40 Opinion - Dammit
- 42 Opinion - Ramjet
- 114 Hardware - Ground Zero
- 116 Hardware - Hardwired
- 158 Lifestyle - Raven's Loft

FEATURES

- 32 Tokyo Game Show '07
- 44 Call of Duty 4
- 70 Mass Effect
- 98 Nokia: Go Play
- 106 Looking Back: Covert Action
- 110 Sweet San Vanelona "Skate" Spots
- 112 Overclock 103
- 118 Hardcore: Console GPUs
- 132 NAG's Field Guide to Gaming Part 1
- 140 Team Fortress 2 Beta
- 144 Command & Conquer 3 Strategy Guide Part 3

HARDWARE

- 122 Sapphire Radeon HD2600X2 vs. GeCube Radeon HD2900Pro
- 124 Zalman HD160XT
- 125 Zalman ZM-GWB 8800 Ultra/GTX Water Block
- 126 Antec P190 + 1200
- 127 ASUS EAH2600PRO
- 128 AirLive AirVideo-2000
- 128 Zalman Reserator XT
- 129 AirLive WMU-6500FS
- 130 Universal abit IP35 Pro
- 131 OCZ DDR2 PC6400 Platinum



PREVIEWS

- 50 Previews Intro
- 52 Eye of Judgment
- 54 Kane & Lynch
- 56 Lost Odyssey
- 58 Soul Calibur Legends
- 60 Left 4 Dead
- 62 Mercenaries 2
- 64 Super Mario Galaxy
- 66 Command & Conquer 3: Kane's Wrath
- 68 Dark Sector
- 68 Dead Head Fred
- 69 Sam & Max: Ice Station Santa

REVIEWS

- 76 Reviews Intro
- 80 Halo 3 [360]
- 82 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08 [360]
- 83 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08 [PS3]
- 84 SKATE [360]
- 86 Stranglehold [360]
- 88 Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End [360]
- 90 Medal of Honor: Airborne [360]
- 92 Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2 [PSP]
- 92 American Chopper 2 [PS2]
- 94 Rapala Fishing [PS]
- 94 Azada [PC]
- 96 Keepsake [PC]
- 96 SeaWorld Adventure Parks Tycoon 2 [PC]
- 96 Murder on the Orient Express [PC]

ON THE DVD



CLASSIC DEMOS

Fallout Tactics
Total Annihilation

DEMOS

BMW M3 Challenge
Jericho
MINI#37 Episode One
SEGA Rally Revolution
Stranglehold
The Settlers: Rise of an Empire
Thrillville: Off The Rails

FREE GAMES

Freeciv
Frets On Fire (RF mod)
Two Kingdoms
Tyrian

FREE STUFF

BioShock Artbook

GAME.DEV

Dev.Mag - Issue 17

INDIE DEMOS

Depths of Peril
Kingdom Eternal
PlayDetective Heartbreakers

MODS

Classic DOOM 3 v1.1

NAG.EXCLUSIVE

Eye of Judgment

PATCHES

Civilization 4 v3.13
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars v1.1
World of Warcraft v2.2.0

TRAILERS

Age of Empires 3 - India
Age of Empires 3 - Japan
Army of Two
Assassin's Creed (Dev Commentary)
Burnout Paradise
Dungeon Hero
Mass Effect (Dev Commentary)
PAIN
SEGA Rally
Team Fortress 2 - Meet the Demoman
Time Crisis 4
Tomb Raider: Anniversary
World in Conflict

UTILITIES

QuickTime 7



GAS
POWERED
GAMES

THQ

Prepare For Combat



Best Strategy Game of E3 2006

World Cyber Games (WCG) 2007 Official Games Candidate

SUPREME COMMANDER

AN RTS FROM
CHRIS TAYLOR

SILENT-PIPE³

GIGABYTE Silent-Pipe 3™ adds a layer of long and short fins with trapezoid punches which utilize Natural Convection within the chassis to transform the airflow inside the heat sink from smooth (Laminar) to rough (Turbulent) airflow. What is created is a completely silent, natural airflow system which greatly enhances the overall thermal performance of the graphics card.



Inner Turbulence Fluid Mechanics Design

Utilizing a series of layered long and short fins with **trapezoid punches**, Silent-Pipe 3™ transforms laminar (smooth) air flow into turbulent (rough) air flow inside the heat sink, increasing the heat exchange ratio and enhancing overall thermal performance.



Front-flow thermal module with layered long-short fins

Silent-Pipe 3™ features a series of layered fins both short and long which can increase the flow rate, pulling colder air into chassis fast.



GV-NX86S256H

- Powered by NVIDIA GeForce 8600 GTS GPU
- GIGABYTE Silent-Pipe 3™ thermal technology
- All-Solid Capacitor design
- Full support for Microsoft® DirectX® 10 and Shader Model 4.0
- Integrated with 256MB / 128-bit GDDR3 memory
- Features dual DVI-I (dual-link) / D-Sub (by adapter) / HDTV
- HDCP Compliant
- The hottest 3D game: Supreme Commander Bundled



For more information, please call our distributors:



Johannesburg:

Tel: (001) 203 1000

Fax: (011) 203 1192

Cape Town:

Tel: (021) 555 7136

Fax: (021) 555 7187

Durban:

Tel: (031) 571 8839

Fax: (031) 571 8865

Port Elizabeth:

Tel: (041) 398 7082

Fax: (041) 398 7135

Bloemfontein:

Tel: (051) 430 0000

Fax: (051) 430 1144



www.gigabyte.com.tw

These speed settings are not guaranteed by GIGABYTE. The specification and pictures are subject to change without notice. All trademarks and logos are the properties of their respective holders. Any overclocking is at user's risk. GIGABYTE Technology shall not be responsible for any damage or instability to your processor, motherboard, or any other components.

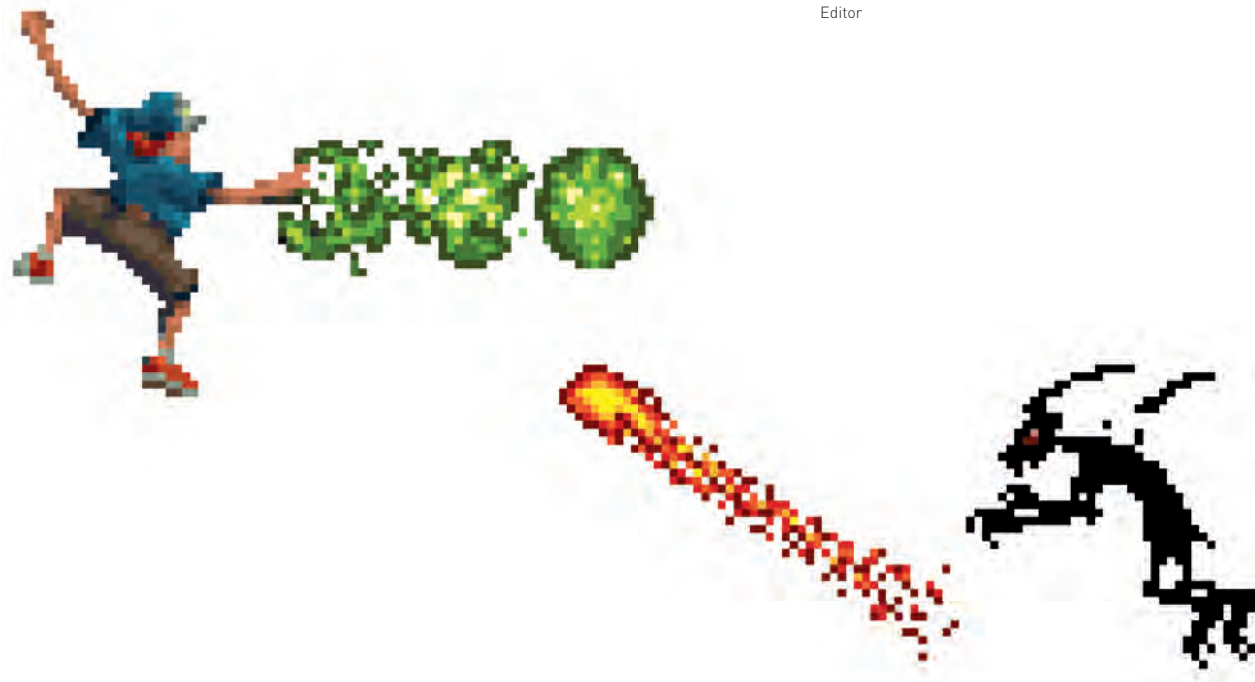
GIGABYTE™

THIS ISSUE WAS A bastard to get done, thanks to rAge happening the weekend before we started. That means that the week before rAge, when a lot of the planning and such happen, was a dud. Still, here it is! In my opinion, it's a bit weak review wise, but the big guns only started rolling out when we were already in production. The December issue will be something else, so if you are holding off on a purchase until we had our say, that's likely the month to catch. Still, there's good stuff in this issue as well as a new mobile section. That justifies NAG now sitting at 164 pages, though as always, the pages jump depending on what time of the year it is. Sure, we could just stick to 128 pages, but that's so... small.

While at rAge, a few readers cornered me and asked why we are so pro-Xbox. Is Microsoft paying us? Do we hate Sony? What's the deal? I wondered how long it would take before that sentiment started doing the rounds, but I don't agree with it. Here's the situation: NAG tries to bring as much as it can to as wide a gaming audience locally. That means that we often reflect the wider sentiment of the industry. The reaction towards the PlayStation 3 and Sony has not been good; something I feel Sony can take a lot of the blame for. If I had to pick one quick example: a year or so ago Sony told the world that rumble was a last-gen feature; now it finally bit the bullet and rolled out a new SIXAXIS. NAG isn't pro 360. It just happens that the 360 is making far fewer mistakes and foot-in-mouth moments – or at least few big ones. It's not doing anything really wonderful either, but I think Sony is trying too hard to act special. Once the PS3 gets some really big games behind it, things will be fairer. NAG is also not pro-console. Consoles just happen to be a huge part of the market. Imagine a farming magazine that spent most of its time talking about raising emus, ignoring cattle and sheep completely. That's just not realistic.

NAG is a reflection of what the industry looks like right now, without some of the stupid bits. But Sony fans, we're not against you. As the PS3 picks up pace, we'll be there to support it.

James Francis
Editor



NAG

NAG is not available in large format print, brail or on audio tape.

managing editor
michael james
michael.james@tidemedia.co.za

editor
james francis
james.francis@tidemedia.co.za

games editor
miktat dracon
miktat.dracon@tidemedia.co.za

contributing editors
regardt van der berg

technical writers
toby hudson
neo sibeko

staff writer
alex jelagin

copy editor
nati de jager

contributors
adam liebman
anton lines
bradley hatton-jones
clive burmeister
danny day
eddie francis
justin slabbert
megan hughes
sean james
tarryn van der byl
walt pretorius

sales manager
len nery
len.nery@tidemedia.co.za
+27 84 594 9909

marketing and promotions manager
jacqui jacobs
jacqui.jacobs@tidemedia.co.za
+27 82 778 8439

art director
chris bistline

designer
chris savides

photography
dreamstime.com
chris bistline

office assistant
paul ndebele

tide media
p o box 237
olivedale
2158
south africa
tel +27 11 704 2679
fax +27 11 704 4120

subscription department
subs@tidemedia.co.za

internet
www.nag.co.za
www.tidemedia.co.za

printing
print ability

distribution
jmd distribution



Copyright 2007 Tide Media.
All rights reserved. No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form whatsoever without the express written consent of the Publisher. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Publisher or the Editors. All Trademarks and Registered Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.

I am a mother pheasant plucker.
I pluck mother pheasants.
I am the most pleasant mother pheasant plucker to ever pluck a mother pheasant.

NAG REVIEW RIGS SUPPLIED BY:

GIGABYTE
TECHNOLOGY

Upgrade Your Life™



3DAURORA570
Performance with style Series



GIGABYTE

Just add coolant!



It's not just a case!



Mercury, with built-in watercooling system, is not just a case! It offers a quick and beautiful way for power users to have extreme over-clocking experience.

3D mercury



EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

CONSUMER: Carl

REACTION: Halo 3 = Crap

SURELY, I AM NOT the only person in the world who realizes how much *Halo 3* sucks! It is surely the most over-hyped game in videogaming history! I arrived home last Friday night to find that my girlfriend had bought it for me: she saw the launch on TV, got excited and thought I would like it. Sadly, she was mistaken.

I recently finished *The Darkness* and found *Halo 3* extremely bland – disappointing graphics and horrible gameplay. *The Darkness* simply outclasses it in all aspects. In fact, I think that both *Prey* and *Quake 4* have better graphics and better gameplay. I noted that *Halo 3* had received rave reviews online and I am dumbstruck why! If this game was not called *Halo 3* but ‘Space Man’ or something else, I do not think any magazine or Internet site would score it above 4 out of 10!

Am I wrong?

Hey, Carl, never say that. You might be. If there's anything a member of the Conglomerate Network of Gaming Media Analysts could tell you, never challenge people about the accuracy of your information. Always give that kind of fifty-fifty thing. Say, "I think" a lot. Moreover, always be vague about your ideas, but quote one key thing so that people know you know what you are talking about. You should ask, "Why the hell do they still put vehicles in the game with broken controls?" It shows that you did your research, even if you didn't really. What we mean is that you should research, but keeping things vague makes it easier to take your time and have a few more coffees. Now you are a real analyst.

On a different note, you're not getting the prize. Work with us here: your GIRLFRIEND saw an AD ON TV for a GAME, thought you'd like it and BOUGHT IT FOR YOU. We're going

The ‘Exception to the Rule’ prize is sponsored by EA South Africa. The winner receives two games for coming up with the most eclectic chicken scratch.

IMPORTANT STUFF! PAY ATTENTION!

Land Mail: P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158

Cyber mail: letters@tidemedia.co.za

Important: Include your details when mailing us, otherwise how will you ever get your prize if you win...

TOPIC FOR NEXT MONTH:

Did you get a Wii? Like it?



to get letters from people demanding her phone number. Who cares if Halo 3 is crap? You thankless bastard. We're going to rummage through EA's stuff and find a game that a chick would dig. Because we're sensitive like that.

CONSUMER: Jonathan Funcke

REACTION: Are DX10 and Valve hurting gaming?

THIS IS NOT ANOTHER letter to say how amazing your magazine is (we all know it is and my saying so won't make a difference). What I want to talk about is how some companies have become so blinded by their greedy need to make more money than in the process they end up damaging their reputation, sales and profit.

Take Microsoft for example... Everyone I've spoken to wants DX10 and quite a few people have DX10-ready graphics cards. However, nearly none of the people wants Vista because it's unstable and unreliable. Thus, the company's greed has hindered the gaming community by restricting DX10. Another example is Valve. When they announced *The Orange Box*, people complained that they already had *HL2* and *HL2: Episode 1* and didn't want the extra copies. Valve's response was that you can sell the extra games to someone else... Stop here for a second. What happens to that person if he wants it and then plays *Episode 2*? The tactic of bundling old games so that we have to pay an extra R100 really p*sses me off. My only solution is to give (for free because no one wants to buy) the extra games to a friend so that we can then play *HL2* mods...

My final question is: Are we all gonna experience *déjà vu* when *Episode 3* comes out?

PS: Thanks for a great magazine.

Yes, this DirectX 10 thing is really a pain for us all. You think gamers have it bad? CONGMAN members are petrified to make any predictions about DirectX 10 or Vista. It's supposed to be good, isn't it? Like all of you out there, we've also watched the videos or had our secretaries explain it to us while having a latté. It sounds pretty awesome and that's what DX10 is – a bundle of awesomeness. However, never use Awesome when talking to the media. Say something like "cutting-edge technology is definitely what this market tends to move towards." Unfortunately, DX10 makes it tricky. No one's using it! Well, not enough people to go and take bets on. Therefore, we analysts steer

away from it. Vista? All analysts use Macs! What were you talking about again? Oh, yes, Orange Box. Listen, Valve is hot stuff, so we predict that their games will do well and make money. You can take that to the bank!

CONSUMER: Dean Noton

REACTION: Sexism in the gaming world

FIRST OFF, GREAT RAGE this year. I can see that this event is growing and becoming a much more anticipated event each year. This year, we (my fiancée and I) ventured to the Dome on the Sunday to see what rAge had to offer. I enjoyed seeing the usuals and some new stands (like seeing the Wii for the first time) and generally moseyed about. I am an avid gamer (with more games than an Asian kid!) and my fiancée is a huge C&C and *StarCraft* fan. Like me, she knows PCs and has a general knowledge of the gaming industry. Therefore, we both enjoy the event. However, this year we noticed something that seems to be becoming a trend.

If I walked to a stand, normally someone would come over and ask something or try and sell me something. This is fine because that's the whole point. However, when she walked into a shop or stand, she was greeted with very little interest. Why is that? She stood in one shop for half an hour to enquire about a gadget she saw, but no one there was interested in assisting her. I also noticed that most representatives at stands spent more time speaking to the ‘gents’ than the ladies. Normally I just laugh about things like this when I read about it, but to witness it first hand, I was a little surprised. She enjoys strategy games more than me and she will most likely be the first in the ‘virtual’ queue when *StarCraft II* comes out. So for her, rAge is of interest. However, to go to an event and come out feeling a little frustrated and neglected makes you wonder.

I have been to local LANs where she

had beaten some guys in *StarCraft* and afterwards they would say, “She got lucky.” I never really thought about it, but do we all look down on female gamers (or even enthusiasts) because they are ‘girls’ or is it because they are the minority. We just hope that it's more the exception than the rule. So the question is: Are we still sexist in the gaming arena?

*Shhhhhhh! Don't say that word! The S word is very bad for business. Do you want to go and scare off investors? If there's no serious money, analysts have no chance of surviving. We'll share a secret – a small confession: analysts don't really do anything. We just read our RSS feeds every morning and then make sure that the media quote us. Every now and then, we might release a ‘report’, but since no one ever reads reports (really, they don't; we did a report on it) and instead just quotes our press releases and slide shows (Flash is AWESOME), no one notices. If you mess this up for us, we're gonna find you and take you down to Hell with us. Anyway, the real problem here is not the industry; it's women. Women are hard to sell computer stuff to. Shoes, perfumes, aprons, guns, cereal, pencils, robots, baby carriages, and very large ‘passenger vehicles’ – no problem. Broads like that stuff. But computer products? Then it gets complicated. Like, what games do women like? We had it down with The Sims, but then all we get is that they play other stuff as well. Like *StarCraft* and so on. What gives? Can't women be stable? Can't they just stick to a demographic long enough for us to get the slides out? The sales people are just as confused as we are. The guy was probably looking at your fiancée, but wasn't sure if she wanted to buy the gadget, the display case or ask where they got the carpets? Men sniff the box and then give someone cash. THAT'S an industry.*

I never really thought about it, but do we all look down on female gamers (or even enthusiasts) because they are ‘girls’ or is it because they are the minority.

Balanced Graphical Power for Enhanced Performance

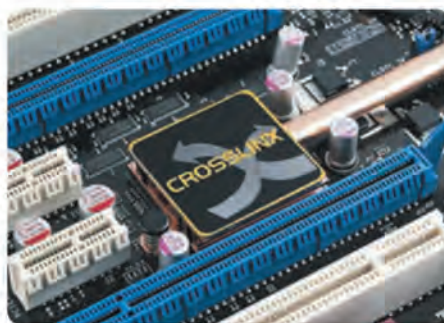
ASUS ROG Blitz Extreme Motherboard

It seems that ASUS is not just content with making high-quality motherboards. I happened upon the newly released ASUS ROG Blitz Extreme motherboard and believe me when I say that it looks set to blow you away. Armed with technologies like Crosslinx and the Fusion Block System; and a host of unique perks and features, gamers can expect to receive enhanced support for better performance while operating at cooler temperatures - prolonging their component lifespans.



Improved Frame Rates with Crosslinx Technology

Built for extreme gaming, the ROG motherboard provides excellent graphical support with multiple GPUs support - the standard for power gaming users. Traditional P35 motherboards can only support PCIe x16 and x4 slots - limiting performance outputs. The ROG motherboard on the other hand, is able to utilize ASUS's exclusive Crosslinx technology features a dedicated graphics controller that supports dual PCIe x8 channels - providing gamers with higher frame rates for that extra edge by breaking through the speed bottlenecks.



47% Cooler with Fusion Block System

The ASUS Fusion Block System works by utilizing a unique heatpipe with a waterblock cooling solution that connects the waterblock to the watercooling circuit without the need

to buy an extra chipset waterblock - lowering temperatures by 47% in comparison to pure heatpipe cooling designs. Building on the ROG's unique heatpipe system, the Fusion Block System provides a dual path cooling system to cool down the motherboard - allowing gamers to achieve maximum performance while keeping their PCs cool.



ON THE FORUM

QUESTION: Are you going to break the bank during Christmas or buy very selectively?

T Kill3r: Very selectively. If I buy everything that I want that's going to come out then I'll become bankrupt.

Turk1sh: I have no choice but to break da bank – too many good games not to miss out on.

Mad Don McKilt: Seeing as I'm stuck to one platform and since my budget is rather limited, I guess I'll have to be quite selective with what I get.

Yumi kitty: Selective. For sure. My bank account can only afford that!

Oblivios: Not likely that I'll actually buy anything, and even if I did, I probably couldn't play it.*sobedysob* But I'm planning on getting some Warhammer miniatures and starting an army!

dammit: I broke the bank already upgrading my computer, so, ironically, I won't be buying any new games for a while.

Silent Mist: Break the bank. Lots of good games coming out. *Assassin's Creed*, *Unreal Tournament 3*, *Hellgate: London*, to name a few. Thank goodness for credit cards.

Machine: I buy selectively. I can afford to break the bank, but I'd rather enjoy a new game a month, take in the experience and take my time finishing it.

ShadowBurn: I will most likely buy only a select few like *Crysis* and *Hellgate: London*.

Splendid: I'm gonna stop drinking, driving and smoking. Way too many great games coming out. *Hellgate: London*, *Assassins Creed*, *Crysis*, *Unreal 3*, etc. Gonna be a great end of the year.

Elemenohpee: Have to break the bank! *Crysis*... enough said. Just the price you have to pay to play it on your PC will kill me!

Repline: One of the best things this time of year is BONUS TIME! And being married means DOUBLE THE BONUS! Heck, you only live once – break the bank I say.

dolfieman: I think I'm going to put together a cunning plan to rob the Swiss bank. I'll assemble a team from the NAG forums and we can call it Gamers' 14.

Have your say on the NAG forums
<http://forums.tidemedia.co.za>

When someone is asked what makes a game fun, most people would say the gameplay or something. But hell, I like good graphics! To me it's what smoothes a game's edges.

CONSUMER: Christopher Araujo

REACTION: Why do adults get the good stuff?

WHY ARE ALL THE classics for 18 years and older. I speak of games like *Gears of War*, *F.E.A.R.*, *Grand Theft Auto*, etc. Everyone wants these classics, but can't because they are underage. This is also a reason why people support piracy (and I'm not saying I do). I know some games like *Viva Piñata* are classics and are for the small-minded, but that is not an excuse. Luckily for me, my mother allows me to play age-restricted games of 16 (and for 18 she will have to read a review, preview, or see it for herself), but I want games like *Gears of War* for my Xbox 360. However, because I'm underage, I can't. So what's the point of videogames if 57% of gamers can't play it? Developers should make more classics for the 3-16 age group (*Tomb Raider: Anniversary* is doing well for me now; and *Lost Planet: Extreme Condition*). I just wish SA were a lot like Japan when it comes to what a kid can handle and not their age, and the USA with all the good technology (even though SA has *Manhunt 2* and the USA doesn't). PS. Are there any clubs in Pretoria to teach people computer programming? I wanna make 3D games, and Game Maker is complicated.

You have a point. Recently someone released a report about this, of which we read the press release. All COGMAN members agree that there is a lot more that can be done for the younger gamers who aren't lucky enough to have mature games. It is very important that we get more access to the teen demographic, because no one knows what the hell teens think about. So our guesses would be as good as anyone's, which means we won't look stupid when we are wrong. But we can help you get your mom to let you choose your games. Tell her our studies have shown that parents who read reviews of games their kids want are 83% more likely to buy them.

CONSUMER: Christo Steyn

REACTION: Graphics these days

FIRST, THANKS FOR A 'lekker' mag. Where would South African gaming be without you? However, on to my topic... When someone is asked what makes a game fun, most people would say the gameplay or something. But hell, I like good graphics! To me it's what smoothes a game's edges. And has anyone noticed that most games these days don't actually have bad graphics? Just look at games like *Far Cry*, *HL2*, *Battlefield 2*, and so on. They are older titles, but their graphics still rocks, and I haven't recently seen a game that doesn't have some nice eye candy. It's what makes technology so great. Soon, every game is going to look like the up-and-coming *Crysis*. But the cost to upgrade your system to play these titles really bites you in the ass. I recently upgraded my graphics card. Now I hear that this card may just play *Crysis* on low settings... Can feel my wallet hurting already. But to the point – I don't think that in the future we even have to worry about how a game will look and should focus more on gameplay. How much better will we get than *Crysis*? That game looks awesome!

Yes! Graphics is awesome! Crysis is super cool! It's a sure bet – always stack your chips on graphics and stuff like that, because if it's pretty, people will buy it. The COGMAN computer network even has a hive

of machines dedicated to scanning new screenshots and automatically mailing press releases expressing confidence in the game! People don't like stupid graphics like LocoRoco. Boy, did that bomb. If only the developers listened to analysts. They would have said, "Where are the guns? Kids like guns. Give that blob a grenade launcher."

CONSUMER: Hugo May

REACTION: The best of the best

IN THE WORLD WE live in today, everything is competitive. Everyone wants to be the best! With gaming, we have pro-gamers (the guys who can shoot a headshot with a Magnum while running, jumping and at the same time be a victim of a flash bang). Many people criticise pro-gamers for taking games too seriously and forget that it's supposed to be fun playing a game. I remember the first time I played *CS* – I fell in love with FPSs. On off days I spend a lot of my time playing *Battlefield 2142* online. On the local SGS servers there is a guy named "enigma-shifty" who wreaks havoc in combat with his Voss L-AR (light assault rifle). This guy is a pro-gamer (he went to Singapore representing South Africa) and is kind of like a role model for me. I'm always out trying to get my skills as leet as enigma's.

So, should we judge pro-gamers? I say NO. They could do us only good by bringing gaming to the world. They're kind of like ambassadors for us all and need the respect they deserve. It must be very nice to be paid for doing what you love.

You want to talk about getting paid for what you love? We get paid for guessing! But you see, professional gaming just isn't worth anything to those who make money off making noise. Analysts need numbers – preferably really big ones – to make our arguments stick. Besides, most analysts know you should avoid covering sports, because there you actually have to know the game they are playing. Also, once you start picking the best of the best, you're just excluding the rabble. We NEED the rabble! Don't hate the rabble!

CONSUMER: Anonymous

REACTION: How I Rate Games

I HAVE BEEN READING YOUR magazine for one year to be exact and I listen to the advice I get from you about the games. But then you said that *Dark Sector* would be the next *Half-Life*! (It looks so stupid – a guy with metal over him). I finish games in 1-4 days and the longest I have ever played a game is one month (the damn game wouldn't give the right objectives and tell me where to go – frustrating). When I say that I have finished a game in one day, I have. The game is *Star Wars Empire at War: Forces of Corruption*. When I read your article in the magazine, I thought to myself that the rating couldn't be right and since I had the first one, I went to go buy the expansion. Waste of a good gaming day! Personally, I would give it 10 out of 100. It's short, has next to no story line and takes you through the game like you're a two year old! Now, if *Dark Sector* is so much better than *Half-Life* and will be the next one, call me stupid – I shall stay loyal to *Half-Life* no matter what.

You can play a game in a day? You should become an analyst! Seriously, you'd do well. You'd actually have some in-depth knowledge about games...

Broadband

ADSL

from

weonline

Special Offer!

We provide modems or routers on monthly contracts at no additional charge. More information here: www.weonline.biz/adsloffer



ADSL options

R59.66

per GB

ADSL 3GB	→	R179 per month
ADSL 5GB	→	R299 per month
ADSL 7GB	→	R419 per month
ADSL 10GB	→	R599 per month
ADSL 15GB	→	R899 per month

Don't have an ADSL line yet?

- Order an ADSL line from Telkom on 10219
- Tell them you want to use Weonline as your ISP
- Contact Weonline on 0861-666-555 to order
- Our price excludes Telkom line rental

Hosting options

From

R15

per month

Linux Starter Hosting	→	R15 per month
Windows Starter Hosting	→	R45 per month
Linux Econo Hosting	→	R49 per month
Dedicated Server Hosting	→	R1536 per month

Powered by
PLESK

FOR WINDOWS



Powered by
PLESK
RELOADED



All Weonline's hosting packages include the following features:

- South African or US Servers
- FrontPage Server Extensions
- Spam Filtering
- Data Backups
- Plesk Control Panel
- Telephonic and E-mail support
- Virus Scanning
- And more

For full details visit www.weonline.biz
sales@weonline.biz | 0861-666-555



weonline

YOUR BETTER HOSTING SOLUTION



All services are subject to terms and conditions.
E & OE. All names and trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



HALO 3 SETS NEW RECORDS

MASTER CHIEF CLAIMS DOMINANCE
OVER SPIDEY AND HARRY POTTER

HALO 3 HAS BROKEN all kinds of records, according to Microsoft. The game grossed over \$170 million in its first day of sales in the United States. That's compared to *Spider-Man 3*'s record of \$59 million and the last *Harry Potter* book, *Deathly Hallows*, which took an estimated \$170 million on its launch day as well. The final chapter in the trilogy totaled over \$300 million by the end of the first week. This shatters the previous record held by *Halo 2*, which made \$125 million on its launch day. Microsoft has welcomed the news, especially since this gives the 360 a needed boost ahead of the holiday season. But while the success may be a record in terms of money, it's not a unit record. *Halo 3* retailed for above \$50, while *Deathly Hallows* sold for between \$35 and \$18. A movie ticket typically costs \$10 or less. In other words, in terms of profit, games are not as lucrative as movies or books. While *Halo 3* sold an estimated 2.34 million units on its first day, *Deathly Hallows* moved a much larger 8.3 million units.

Halo 3 fever hit elsewhere as well. The game caught everyone by surprise as it raced to the top of the Japanese charts and

sold out in the 360-hostile market. This also brought a surge to 360 hardware sales, but the PlayStation 3 and Wii still outsell the 360 by factors of three or more. Pirates also didn't skip out and a copy of the game appeared on torrent sites three days before its release. Overall, the massive hype built by Microsoft's marketing machine paid off and as expected, *Halo 3* raced to the top of the LIVE charts, pushing long-time leader *Gears of War* to the second spot.





BUNGIE LEAVES MS STABLE

HALO DEVELOPER, BUNGIE, HAS become an independent studio, ending Microsoft's ownership of the company. The studio was acquired by Microsoft in 2000 to develop first-party games for the Xbox and has since become a big player in the industry. But after *Halo 3*, Bungie is looking towards new horizons, which means it can't stay tied to one publisher.

Company founder, Jason Jones, said, "Bungie is like a shark. We have to keep moving to survive. We have to continually test ourselves, or we might as well be dolphins. Or manatees." Both companies also stressed that this isn't a parting of ways for the two. Microsoft will still hold a small equity in Bungie, while the developer still honours its long-term publishing deals for *Halo* and other franchises. The studio won't be working on *Halo 4*, but it is developing *Halo Wars*, plus it still views the 360 as its primary platform. But this will allow Bungie to own IP it creates.

BUNGIE®



HALO 3 SURPRISES LAUNCH DATE

Several retailers around the world briefly broke the *Halo 3* street date – that is, the date at which the game launches worldwide. It's not particularly unusual – a similar thing happened to *BioShock* and at least two or three other games every year. The largest retailer to accidentally sell the game early was UK chain Argos, which started giving bundles of the game to pre-order customers when stock arrived. It discovered the mistake and this was stopped, though we wonder why pre-order guys don't deserve getting their stuff earlier? Two other British retailers briefly followed, as well as a Norwegian retailer. Local retailers also apparently got too enthusiastic, with reports of outlets of CNA and Reggies selling the game early. But Microsoft isn't planning to punish the retailers for their transgressions. It did, though, threaten to ban people threat.



Quantum Force
Performance, without compromise
www.quantum-force.net

MARS



UNLEASH THE POWER...



SPECIFICATION SUMMARY

- Supports Intel® Core™2 Quad and Core™2 Duo processors
- Intel® P35 with chipset overspeed protection removed
- Dual DDR2 1066MHz Memory, max. 8Gb.
- 2" PCIe x16 with ATI® CrossFire™ support
- Gladiator BIOS for advanced overclocking
- 100% SOLID Capacitor design & Cool Pipe system
- Enthusiast features including Onboard CMOS & OC Gear profiles
- AEGIS Panel – Windows-based OC and monitoring utility

SAHARA
THE ULTIMATE IN PCs

For more information,
please contact our distributor:
Sahara Computers, tel. +27 11 542 1000
Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
89 Gazelle Ave, Corporate Park, Old Pretoria Main Road,

FOXCONN®

www.foxconnchannel.com

SNIPPETS

YOUR ESSENTIAL INFO, NOW IN BITE-SIZED PORTIONS!



A cast of Hollywood actors has been signed up to provide voices for **Turok**. Timothy Olyphant, Ron Perlman, Chris Judge and Powers Booth will all give us something to listen to. None are voicing dinosaurs.



The ex-members from **Team Clover** who went on to form Seeds have changed their minds. Seeds has been closed without producing anything and a new studio, Platinum Games, was announced.



Shadowrun developer, **FASA Studios**, has closed its doors, though the staff has moved to other Microsoft studios. It will continue to support the community for the games it has developed.



In response to the bad reviews **Lair** has gotten, Sony sent out a 'reviewer's manual', which was really a glorified manual. Most reviewers apparently threw it away because no one reads manuals anymore.

Refuting rumours online, id guru, **John Carmack**, has confirmed that he still supports Linux. He added that while a Linux SKU of his new engine, **Rage**, won't be available at launch, a binary for the operating system is planned.



VALVE RECONSIDERS EPISODIC GAMING

AFTER EPISODE 3 THE FANS DECIDE

VALVE KINGPIN, **GABE NEWELL**, has revealed that, following the (eventual) release of *Half-Life: Episode 3*, his company intends to re-evaluate its position regarding the future of episodic gaming. Actually, he said exactly the same thing about a year ago in an interview with CNN, but that announcement somehow managed to slither under the blogosphere's radar perimeter.

"I think what we really want to do is have a couple of examples out there – *Episode One*, and how long it was to play and how long it took to develop, *Episode Two*, *Portal* and *TF2* and then

the third part of the trilogy," Newell told CVG, "and then sit down with the community and say, 'Okay, so what do you want?' Do you want us to do more episodes? Do you want us to really tighten down the time frames and look at the scope of what we're doing so that that's possible for us to go back to the large monolithic projects?"

In the meantime, Big Gabe plans to roll on over to *Sam & Max* developer, Telltale Games, and swap episodic gaming horror stories around the campfire.

So, Episodes Four, Five, and Six, or *Half-Life 3*? Stay tuned.



PUBLISHERS LOOK EAST

THE RECENT RELEASE OF Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter 2* on PS3, which was developed by Ubisoft's own Shangai Studios, made it clear that there is a great source of developers available in China. It is because of this that Ubisoft has opened up another studio in Chendu, which they hope to house a further 200 developers in. EA is also jumping onto the bandwagon with expectancies that it will partner up with a few Japanese-based developers before too long. Despite having a massive stake in The9 and Neowiz, EA's Eastern revenues are only about 6% of their total, which they hope to expand.



DID ROCKSTAR SQUASH GRAND THEFT ITCHY?

Did Rockstar have a problem with *The Simpsons Game* parodying *Grand Theft Auto*? Apparently that's the case after what happened at the Leipzig Games Convention. According to the game's lead designer, Greg Lizzer, who says someone from Rockstar came to the EA stand and asked that the *Grand Theft Itchy* posters be removed. This was one of several game parodies that apparently appear in the game – others are *Medal of Honor* and *Neverquest*.

"I don't know who specifically at Rockstar", Rizzer said. "I'm guessing probably more than anyone it was a lawyer. The people who work on that product, I doubt they were like, 'Stop that!'" The guys from Harmonix were better sports and wanted 20 posters of the *Sitar Hero* game. Rockstar hasn't commented on Rizzer's remark, but rumours spread that actual cuts were made to the game as well and that other companies also complained, though Rizzer said nothing of this nature.

M-RATED GAMES SELLING BIG

A new study done by research group, EEDAR, of US game sales has highlighted that mature-rated games have the highest average gross sales in the region. This comes as a surprise as many major retailers refuse to have mature-rated games on their shelves (such as Walmart). The study looked at 219 retail games and 187 downloadable games for Wii, PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360. The study also showed that mature-rated games have the highest average Metacritic scores, a score above 90 grossing sales up to 531% more than industry average.





MANHUNT BACK IN THE HEADLINES (SURPRISE!)

BBFC STILL DOESN'T LIKE ROCKSTAR'S HORROR TITLE

OKAY, SO FOLLOWING SOME strategic cosmetic trimming, the persecuted title has finally been cleared for an M-rating release Stateside, but the UK isn't playing along. While the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) acknowledged the changes made to the game, director David Cooke declared them "...clearly insufficient. There has been a reduction in the visual detail in some of the 'execution kills', but in others they retain their original visceral and casually sadistic nature."

This reduction includes the excision of a sequence involving pliers and an unlucky scrotum, as well as a sort of blurring of major death strikes. "Players will be able to see character movement, blood splatters, and sometimes they may catch a glimpse of an identifiable action," revealed IGN, "but mostly it's guesswork - a garbled, motiony mess."

Neither garbled nor motiony enough for the BBFC, apparently. "We did make suggestions for further changes to the game," added Cooke, "but the distributor has chosen not to make them, and as a result we have rejected the game on both platforms."



Oh well, you can get it off the intertrons anyway. A Beta version of the uncensored PS2 edition recently wriggled its way onto the BitTorrent network. The resulting deluge of lurid videos on GameTrailers and YouTube could not have come at a worse time, however, what with British PM, Gordon Brown's, latest banhammer-in-hand plan to review the availability of violent and sexual imagery in videogames and on the Internet. Just remember, it's not censorship, it's "rules governing some aspects of the Internet and videos where children are involved".

SILICON KNIGHTS VS. EPIC: ROUND 4! FIGHT!

The story so far: Silicon Knights sued Epic for alleged breach of contract in the licensing of the Unreal Engine 3 for SK's game, *Too Human*. Epic promptly issued a countersuit, claiming Silicon Knights stole Unreal Engine 3 technology to build their own engine.

Silicon Knights then filed a motion for dismissal of Epic's countersuit, with attorney Christopher T. Holland declaring quite simply, "We don't think Epic's counterclaim has any merit." Epic duly responded with its own 11-page filing, scoffing at SK's latest manoeuvre as an attempt to "oppress Epic with burdensome and expensive discovery."

In the meantime, however, a victory for SK could potentially mean trouble for middleware developers. As a legal consultant to Next-Gen. biz summed up Epic's position, "Say I've licensed this [engine] to all the big developers that have multi-million-dollar projects going, and if their projects go south and they're all able to blame me for it, then I could lose my company."



JERICHO BANNED IN GERMANY

Trudging the same lonely path as *Gears of War* and *Dead Rising*, Codemasters' upcoming Clive Barker-penned scarefest, *Jericho*, has been denied a rating by the Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle (Germany's equivalent of the ESRB), effectively banning it in the country. They were apparently somewhat unimpressed by the game's "brutal scenes".

In defiant response, Codemasters has refused to alter the Xbox and PS3 editions, claiming respect for "Mr Barker's creative ideas, despite the German distribution and marketing consequences for the title".

These "distribution and marketing consequences" amount to no console representation, although the game will be available on PC to over-18s.

BUDGET TOP 20



1. The Complete CSI



2. CSI: 3 Dimensions of Murder



3. Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood



4. Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter



5. Age of Mythology: Gold Edition



6. Devil May Cry 3: SE



7. Combat Flight Simulator 2



8. Rainbow Six: Lockdown



9. Rise of Nations: Gold Edition



10. Pirates of the Caribbean: The Legend of Jack Sparrow



11. Playboy: The Mansion: Gold Edition



12. Zoo Tycoon



13. Far Cry



14. The Settlers: Heritage of Kings



15. Star Trek: Legacy



16. Open Season



17. Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002



18. Pacific Fighters



19. Dungeon Siege: Legends of Aranna



20. Rayman 10th Anniversary



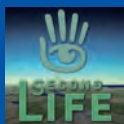
megarom
PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED BY: UBISOFT GAMES LTD. (UK) LTD.
011 361 4000 | usinfo@ubisoft.co.uk





A company called New Medium Enterprise plans to launch a rival format to **HD DVD** and **Blu-ray**. According to Yahoo! News, **HD VDM** hopes to be much cheaper than either format both for the discs and the players and boast a capacity of 30GB.

Is **Second Life** that important? A report from Yankee Group suggests the hype is bigger than the real deal and that the average user only spends 12 minutes a month on the MMO.

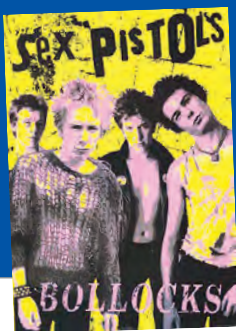


Monolith's Jason Hall and Warner Bros. have teamed up with Alex Pardee to bring his comic show **Chadnam** to life. Why is this significant? Chadnam will use Unreal Engine 3 to create its visuals.



Blizzard has disbanded an erotic guild on **World of Warcraft**. Called Abhorrent Taboo, the guild was into all kind of kinky things, like extreme kink typing and bestiality, but came to an end after other users complained.

Selling out? Nah! **The Sex Pistols** are reuniting (obviously without Johnny Rotten) to re-record Anarchy in the UK for a release of Never Mind The Bollocks, Here Are The Sex Pistols. **Rock Band** will be sponsoring the band's performance in London.



DAYS OF OUR PS3 LIVES

PRESSURE MOUNTS ON PS3 TO GET HIGHER NUMBERS

SPEAKING TO INDUSTRY WEBSITE MCV, Sega America COO Simon Jeffery comments that he thinks a PS3 price-cut would prompt higher sales and he urges console manufacturers to push sales as quickly as possible. He says that the next year or two will be a profit margin struggle, and he wants to see next-generation consoles in as many houses as possible as soon as possible.

Eidos chairman Tim Ryan writes that "The Board continues to believe in the long-term commercial success of PlayStation 3 but believes this make take more time than originally forecast by Sony" and urges Sony to implement a PlayStation 3 price-cut as soon as possible.

Old-time Sony friend Square Enix president Yoichi Wada has mentioned that their old friend needs to straighten up and that they might be hindering their own success. Author Tane Kiyoshi recently released his book, *Why Did The PS3 Fail* in which he attempts to analyse why the PS3 has not been the surefire success Sony had



hoped for.

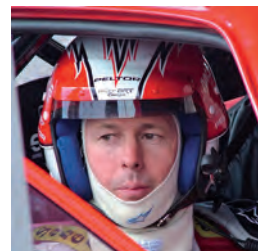
But Sony Computer Entertainment president Kaz Hirai claims that the PlayStation 3 was never marred by a price point problem. Instead it has trouble meeting supply and demand. "I think the original price-point was the

right price-point", he told MCV.

Sony has confirmed that SCE is to discontinue the 60GB PS3 in Europe, with the new 40GB unit as the only available package in the territory. There will also be a 60GB Value Pack bundle this Christmas in the UK, which has a price drop of around 75 pounds. Commercial Director for retailer Game, Tricia Brennan, has welcomed the price cut.

COLIN MCRAE DIES

It is a sad time for rally fans all over the world with the passing away of one of their icons. Legendary driver, Colin McRae, was killed in a tragic helicopter accident in September. This accident also claimed the life of his son and a friend. While this might be the end of his mortal life, his memory will live on in the hearts of all who found joy watching him race or playing his many games. The people at Codemasters have also expressed their condolences to the McRae family and have stated that he will never be forgotten. Rest in peace Colin, your games will keep your memory alive.



GAME ENGINES ON WII = BAD?

The Nintendo Wii has just hit our shores after many months after the overseas launches, and while it is definitely turning out to be a huge success all over the world, game developers like Epic are not too thrilled about developing for it. According to the studio, developing an engine suitable for the Wii would be financially stupid since all the money at the moment lies with Microsoft's own Xbox 360 and in the future, Sony's Playstation 3. While this may be true and the Wii will definitely not be seeing any of Epic's games on their console, Wii owners can still look forward to seeing other engines like Gamebryo, the power behind *Oblivion*, at work. The fate of the Wii has not yet been cast in stone because, while it may be successful now, without much third-party support, who knows how long it will last. Let us just hope that Gamebryo will, at the very least, attract more support for the little machine.

FLASH GAME OF THE MONTH

ANCIENT ORIGINS

<http://kongregate.com/games/mygameline/ancient-origins-flying-fish>

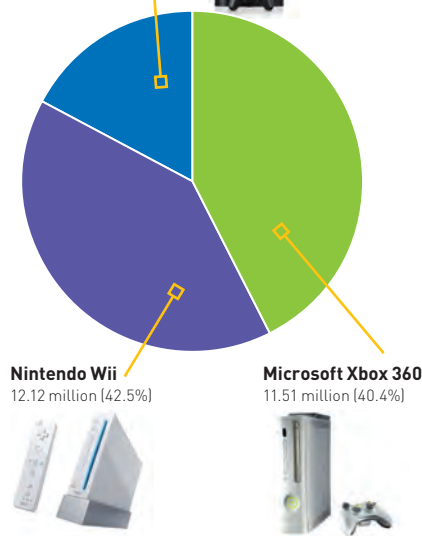
"FOLLOW FRED ON A journey across the sea" is the only description available for *Ancient Origins*, alongside "click to jump out of water and collect pearls to fly" under controls. Sounds strange, but it's actually great fun and a wonderful way to waste time. Clicking lets you flap your wings (once you have some pearls) and stay out of the water (you get eaten if you go back in). Careful timing and some good reflexes are needed to reach the end of each level as arrows and pearls push and bounce you along at high speed. Each level brings with it its own challenges, and you can do combo-points by hitting two or more pearls at the same time.



WORLDWIDE CONSOLE SALES AND MARKET SHARE

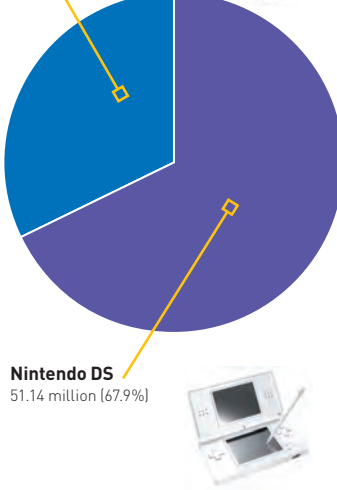
SET-TOP CONSOLES

Sony Playstation 3
4.89 million (17.1%)



HANDHELDS

Sony PSP
24.18 million (32.1%)



SOURCE: VGChartz.com

WII & PSP DOMINATE CONSOLE SALES

SONY'S NEW SLIM MODEL SELLS LIKE HOTCAKES

AFTER MONTHS OF GATHERING momentum, Nintendo's Wii has overtaken the Xbox 360 as the biggest selling console in the current generation of machines. According to tracking sites, the Wii has sold over 12 million units, while the 360 lags behind with figures just over the 11 million mark. This is the first time that Nintendo has been able to take the lead in a console race since the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) did the same between 1990 and 1993.

The news is a bit more mixed for Sony. The PlayStation 3 remains slow on sales. Even though the console has managed to catch up with the 360's momentum in Europe, Microsoft's machine has moved ahead again thanks to the release of the Elite, a price cut on the Premium and Core models, as well as the release of *Halo 3*. Analysts predict that the 360 will beat the PS3 over the holiday season, largely because it boasts a strong game line-up while the

PS3 still needs some serious attention in that department.

But it's not all that gloomy in the Sony camp. The recently released PSP Slim, a revamped model with various design nips and tucks, has surged in sales as Japanese gamers picked up over 500,000 units in just two weeks. The new model moved over 130,000 units on its launch day, touching on the PSP's original launch number of 173,963. This means the PSP effectively dominated the Japanese market for that week, above all the other platforms. It also enjoyed several top spots in the game charts, with Square-Enix's *Crisis Core* taking number one.

Finally, the 360 got a surprise boost from *Halo 3*'s release in the Japanese market. The game's release surged its sales from less than 2,000 to more than 5,000 a week. But this is still well behind the PS3, which Japanese games buy by factors of three to five every week to Microsoft's console.

THE BIOSHOCK THAT NEVER WAS

MYOPIC INDUSTRIALIST ANDREW RYAN might not have predicted Splicers, Big Daddies, Little Sisters, and the indiscriminate damnation of his subaquatic metropolis, Rapture – but three years ago, neither had *BioShock* developer Irrational Games.

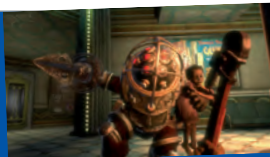
"We believe that original games require a lot of iteration and sudden changes of direction," designer Joe McDonagh told CVG in a recent interview. "It's impossible to sit down at the start of a project and say this game will be XYZ and it will be fun. *BioShock* for instance started out on a tropical island with Nazis."

But don't take his word for it – check out CVG and Gamespot's 2004 previews of a game "set in the near-future [...] in an abandoned World War II laboratory complex" inhabited by "drones, predators and soldiers".

Nobody wanted to touch it, either, McDonagh said. "I remember pitching the game to one publisher who later told a friend of mine that it was 'just another f****ing PC FPS that's going to sell 250,000 units'."



BlackSite © 2006 Midway Games West Inc. All rights reserved. BLACKSITE is a trademark or registered trademark of Midway Games West Inc. Used by permission. MIDWAY, and the Midway logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Midway Amusement Games, LLC. Used by permission. Distributed under license by Midway Home Entertainment Inc. "2", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS3" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



BioShock might be a franchise, according to Take 2, who plans to milk the game for all it's worth. The publisher says we can expect titles every two years.



It is the end of an era, at least for American gamers. **EB Games** merged with rival retailer **Gamestop** in 2005 and the latter has since started to change all the EB Games branches to its own branding. The final shops are busy being changed over the next few months and soon EB will just be a memory.



Castlevania's creator, Koji Igarashi has told Game Informer that he's leaning towards the Xbox 360 to carry the next game in the series. The reason is because the US is Castlevania's biggest market and the US happens to love the 360.



What happens to a **PlayStation 2** when it retires? In China it gets recycled into pens! But why anyone would want to get rid of their trusty PS2 is beyond us...

A **Californian game pirate** has been sentenced to one year in prison and a \$100,000 fine. He was busted with hundreds of copied games after a tip was sent to police.



WOCKING WEBSITES Z: THE RETURN OF THE MAC



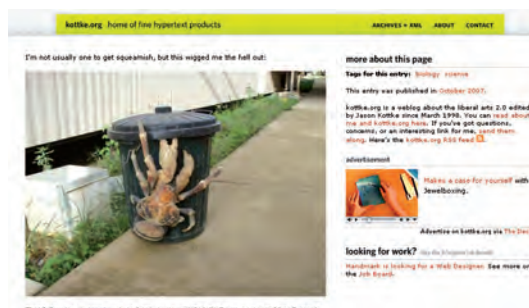
WWW.GAMERSWITHJOBS.COM

If you're a gamer with a job (like us, if you can you believe it), this is the Website for you. No BS, no rampant fanboyism to ruin your day - just well-written, thought-out reviews, previews, articles and interviews.



WWW.LIFEHACKER.COM

Gaming is good and fine, but before you can game with a clear conscience, it helps to get your life on track. Lifehacker is a firm favourite around these parts; an aggregate of good advice, handy tips and links to utilities and programs to make your life that little bit easier.



WWW.KOTTKE.ORG

For fine Hypertext products, look no further than kottke.org: a Website dedicated to bringing you worthwhile stuff to look at instead of the usual "look at me, I've copied something popular from another Website because they told me it's popular". It's a little pretentious, but you can't fault the quality of what kottke gives you.



WWW.TXL.CO.ZA

The Xbox Lounge has re-launched with a slick new Website and reinvigorated gusto. TXL lists and organises online matches, LAN parties and has a busy, vibrant Xbox 360 community on its forums. You can submit your own matches and events, and keep track of upcoming events via the RSS feed.

GAME CRIME

Stupid people are back in the news. A mum in Wisconsin was startled to discover an Xbox 360 and a bunch of other expensive new toys in her 16-year old son's room. She promptly called the rozzers, and Junior is now awaiting trial for two counts of theft and two counts of criminal trespassing. Elsewhere, thieves clobbered a hole in the wall of a Florida Gamestop, and made off with a sizeable plunder of games

and consoles. In Oklahoma, a young man stole a Wii from a neighbour's home, only to suffer remorse and bring it back, offering a bag of marijuana by way of apology. When the owner refused the thoughtful gift, the man returned the next day and snatched the console back. Meanwhile, police killings are at their highest since 1975 in the US, while law enforcement trainer and author of *On Combat*

and *On Violence*, Dave Grossman, is pointing accusatory fingers at "cop-killer, criminal simulators". So why were the statistics higher in 1975? Probably all that wicked rock 'n roll music.

Finally, a story recently slithered through the intertubes, claiming a Kansas teen strangled his little sister while in a *BioShock*-induced fugue. It isn't true.

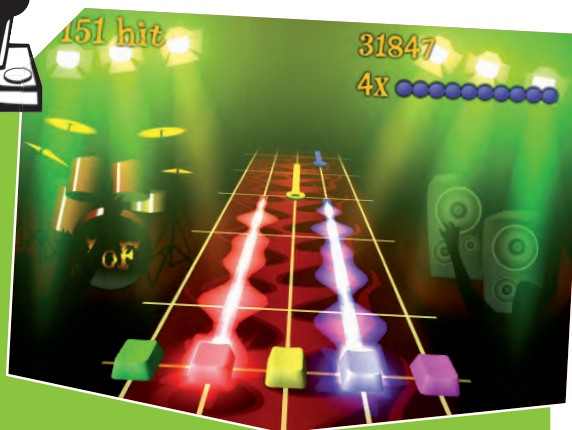
FREE GAME OF THE MONTH

FRETS ON FIRE

<http://fretsonfire.sourceforge.net/> [On the DVD]

"Frets on Fire is an open source clone of the ever-popular PlayStation 2 music/rhythm game, Guitar Hero. And just like Guitar Hero, Frets on Fire features a handful of songs and allows you to play the guitar sections by pressing just a few keys. Instead of using a separate controller to mimic the guitar, Frets on Fire lets you pick up the keyboard and jam in right front of your desk. Best of all, a built-in editor lets you tab any song, spawning a growing community of music-moddors on the web."

WHILE FRETSON FIRE may not be a proper substitute for *Guitar Hero*, it is certainly good enough and does function as a cheap (free!) way to get some practice in before graduating to the real thing (which is, as snobs who can play actual guitar keep reminding us, nothing like the real thing and just a video game). We've included the RF-mod version of *Frets On Fire* on the DVD, which is a modification that makes it emulate *Guitar Hero* that



little bit closer. You can download more songs/notes at Final Fret (<http://www.finalfret.com/>) and even make a few of your own for the songs you like. Much like Stepmania and other free programs that copy/emulate the original idea, *Frets On Fire* isn't perfect and may crash, explode or leave you stranded without your car keys after dark, but at least it's free.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

KRATOS' HANDHELD ADVENTURE, **God of War: Chains of Olympus**, is only going to tear you apart next year in March. • 2008 is filling up! SEGA's action title, **The Club**, has been delayed from December to next year as well. • Freaky and fun PS3 game, **flow**, was impressive, so it deserves an expansion. That is heading to the PS Network, but no date was mentioned. • Get ready to Rock! **Rock Band** will be released Stateside by the end of October and the full kit will only cost \$169.99. • **Mercenaries 2**, the multi-platform sandbox war title, has been delayed to Q1 2008. • Pretender to the GTA throne, **Saints Row**, is coming back. **Saints Row 2** is due next year with more guns, grime and gangbangers. • **Eternal Sonata**, the JRPG based on composer Chopin's dying moments, is not just for the 360 crowd. A PS3 version has been confirmed for next year. • You'll have to wait a bit longer to get into your element. **Dark Messiah: Elements** has been delayed to the 7th of December. • **L.A. Noir**, the impressive-looking PS3 exclusive from Team Bondi and Rockstar, won't be around for a while, which means only in 2009. • Violent and pretty action-fest, **Yakuza**, is getting a sequel. **Yakuza 2** is heading to the PlayStation 2 next year. • Ready for **Gears of War** on the PC? Marcus and all the monsters hit the beige box on 6 November. • Fight! Midway has announced that a next-generation **Mortal Kombat** game is due next year. • PlayStation 3 owners, rejoice! The prince is coming! **Katamari Damacy** director, Jun Morikawa, told press the series will return to Sony's platforms soon. • **Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction**, the next adventure of the McGuyver-ing duo, has been delayed slightly to 30 October. • **Universe at War**, an impressive sci-fi RTS, won't be here soon. The game has been delayed to January 2008. • Is there no movie they will leave alone? Cult fantasy film, **The Princess Bride**, is being made into a game. • Epic announced that it hopes **Unreal Tournament 3** will be done by November, but it has no idea if that will be the case. The PS3 version might be delayed to next year. • **Home**, Sony's answer to other online services, is going to take a while. The service has been delayed to early next year. • The mercenary and his lovable psycho sidekick is coming. **Kane & Lynch** will be released in November, says Eidos. • Mario and Sonic join forces and will be yours to play with by end November when **Sonic & Mario at the Olympics** is released. • The Tom Clancy brand is expanding into new skies – **Air Combat** will involve, well, air combat, and comes courtesy of Ubisoft. • Team **ICO** wasn't at TGS this year, but Sony execs told people that they might be working on an **ICO** or **Shadow of the Colossus** sequel. • Real Time Worlds said that Microsoft was a bit late in asking, so when talks of a **Crackdown** sequel came up, the developer was already working on something else. Yes, no **Crackdown 2**. • **LEGO Batman** developer, Traveller's Tale, is close to securing a publisher for the game. We'd think anyone would grab that up without a moment's hesitation! • **Tabula Rasa**, Starr Long and Richard Garriot's new MMO, has been delayed to the 2nd of November.



KANE & LYNCH DEAD MEN

Traitor



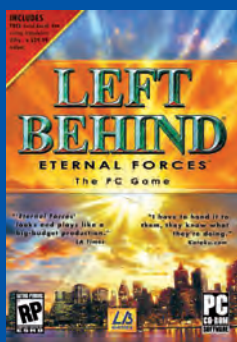
I'm sorry





Peter Moore is making some serious dough going to EA. Apart from netting a \$1.5-million bonus and a nice salary (plus, we bet, an office with a view and a nice parking spot), he also got 400,000 EA shares – worth roughly \$21 million.

According to a company source, **Ubisoft** is not in talks with **SCI** about buying the studio and **Eidos**. The news broke a while back, but since then things have been quiet. Is a sale still on the cards?



While gearing up for an expansion to its first game, Left Behind Games has sent lawyer notices to major gaming blogs for apparently saying nasty things about *Left Behind*. The blogs laughed the threat off.



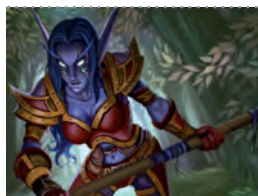
Second Life has everything! It even has baby unicorns – you know, the useless horses with the equally useless single horn. The catch is that if you want your own little pony, you're going to have to have sex with a mature unicorn in the game. Hey, this is Second Life, after all.

Final Fantasy developer, Square-Enix, said it needs to focus more on global expansion. Its CEO, Yoichi Wada, said that "given the fact that the size of overseas markets is now more than three times as large as the domestic market, we recognise numerous growth opportunities."

SQUARE ENIX

WEIRD GAMING

Another person discovered that playing an MMO non-stop will prove fatal. A thirty-year-old man in China dropped dead after playing an MMO for three days non-stop. He just collapsed, possibly due to heart problems.



If the above was playing as a female, he might have stopped and thus survived. A Chinese MMO called *King of the World* has banned males players from playing as female characters. Female players have to be authenticated via Webcams. Sounds more like the developers are trying to get dates.

Several libraries across the globe have started to carry videogames in a bid to get teenagers back to these useful institutions. The latest is one in Lake Zurich, which started a collection of PS2, 360 and PS3 games.



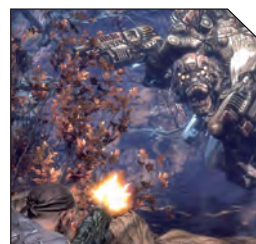
Churches are looking at recruiting teams with games too. Several protestant and evangelical churches in the US have started to host popular Halo nights, where like-minded Christians can discuss their beliefs and get a few frags in at the same time.

Back to China, a police force in the northern city of Tianjin has hosted a three-day *Counter-Strike* competition between its officers, apparently for anti-terrorism training. Don't worry, we won't tell; it's just an excuse to get some gaming in during work!



Careful what you write online! A prison guard in Oregon, US, posted some incriminating statements on a *City of Heroes* forum that landed him in trouble. The man bragged about excessive force he had used against various inmates and posted as much as 13 times a day about his exploits. Someone tipped off a local newspaper, resulting in him being investigated.

A very powerful *World of Warcraft* character was sold online for, wait for it, €7,000. It boasted arguably the best armour and weapons currently in the game; though who pays just shy of R70,000 for an MMO character?



GAMING FILMS: THE LATEST SCOOP

THERE IS A LOT of good news to be shared with regards to games being made into movies, but unfortunately there is also a lot of bad news. The latter having much to do with a certain infamous director named Uwe Boll. Not only has he begun *Far Cry's* production but he has also secured the rights to two upcoming games. The first is a game called *Zombie Massacre* and the second is the upcoming action RPG called *Legend: Hand of God*, which actually sounded promising before this. Any piece of bad news is that the film adaptation of *Halo* looks to have been killed in its tracks and the director, Neil Blomkamp, stating that his ideas have all been scrapped. This doesn't mean to say there will not still be a film in the future, only time will tell. The good news though is that Stuart Beatty, who wrote the script for *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Collateral*, has been signed on to write the script for *Gears of War*. According to Beatty, it might be similarly filmed to that of *300*. But rumours have surfaced that *GOW* might also be cancelled due to budget issues.

THE EVOLUTION OF: RAIL SHOOTERS

"Rail shooters" or "on-rail shooters" are a sub-genre of "shoot 'em ups": noticeable due to the lack of direct control over the path you take and in that you can only direct your shots. It is regarded that the player is tied to a rail, like a roller coaster.



Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom (a.k.a "Zoom 909") (1982)

Space Harrier (1986)



Silpheed (1988)

Star Fox (1993)



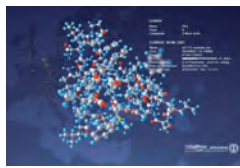
Panzer Dragoon (1995)

Rez (2001)



CONSOLE WATCH

The Church of England has **denounced BAFTA's choice to nominate Resistance: Fall of Man** for an award – the same church that called for Resistance to be banned in June because it had an in-game depiction of Manchester Cathedral without permission. • Square Enix President, Yoichi Wada, has publicly stated that **Sony needs to find a solid marketing strategy for the PS3** and stick with it. • Sony UK CEO, Ray Maguire, says that money previously invested in PS3 backwards compatibility with PS2 titles is **better spent on new game development** or to support hardware price cuts. "So it was a big decision," he said of the facility's removal, "and we know it is a very emotive subject as lots of people think that backwards compatibility is high on the agenda and yet few really use it." • Apparently, the special **"Halo 3" edition for 360 already contains the new 65nm chips**, which run cooler and consume less power. • The combined computation power of PS3 consoles participating in Folding@home has crossed the petaflop line: **PS3 consoles are delivering 1,020 TFLOPS from 41,145 participants** at the time of writing. • SEGA of America President Simon Jeffery recently stated the obvious: that the **PlayStation 2 is going to "have a longer lifetime than any previous console"**, adding that "We expect Sony to price manage the PS2's shelf life for another two or three years at least." • Speaking to GamesIndustry.biz about development for the Wii, founder of Shiny Entertainment, Dave Perry, expressed concerns that third parties will always struggle when up against Nintendo's first party. "You can't assume it is going to be like the other platforms, because you are going to have Nintendo taking most of the sales," said Perry. "And **if Nintendo really sees you as a threat, they will take the moves to wipe you out**. They are not going to let you win." • Nintendo CEO, Satoru Iwata, says the key to attracting fresh audiences is to surprise them with new entertainment ideas and **not just by doing the "easy thing" such as developing great games and sequels**. • 9-year-old Matty Lovo who **saved his dad's life by taking control of a truck** after his dad passed out, really wanted a PS3 as a reward. Sony gave him one.



GAMING CHARTS



August figures provided by GfK
www.gfksa.co.za

PLAYSTATION 3

1	Heavenly Sword
2	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08
3	Ratatouille
4	Colin McRae: DiRT
5	FIFA 08

PLAYSTATION 3

1	MotorStorm
2	Resistance: Fall of Man
3	Transformers: The Game
4	Ninja Gaiden Sigma
5	The Darkness

XBOX 360

1	Halo 3
2	BioShock
3	Project Gotham Racing 3
4	FIFA 08
5	Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights

XBOX 360

1	The Darkness
2	Forza Motorsport 2
3	Blue Dragon
4	Transformers: The Game
5	Fight Night Round 3

PLAYSTATION 2

1	FIFA 08
2	Guitar Hero: Rock the 80s
3	Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights
4	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08
5	Stuntman: Ignition

PLAYSTATION 2

1	Rugby 2007
2	Burnout: Revenge
3	Need for Speed: Carbon
4	Fantastic Four
5	Transformers: The Game

PC

1	Enemy Territory: Quake Wars
2	BioShock
3	Overlord
4	Medal of Honor: Airborne
5	Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2

PC

1	Rugby 2007
2	Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-earth
3	Battlefield 2
4	Need for Speed: Most Wanted
5	Age of Empires III

PSP

1	Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2
2	SEGA Rally
3	FIFA 08
4	Worms: Open Warfare
5	Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights

PSP

1	Transformers: The Game
2	Killzone: Liberation
3	Tekken: Dark Resurrection
4	Fight Night Round 3
5	Burnout: Legends

KANE & LYNCH DEAD MEN™ Murderer

DSM IV Criteria for Schizophrenia

Criterion A: Characteristic symptoms: Two (or more) of the following, each present for a significant portion of time during a 1-month period:

- delusions
- hallucinations
- disorganized speech (e.g., frequent derailment or incoherence)
- grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior
- negative symptoms i.e., affective flattening, alogia or avolition



PLAYSTATION 3



Games for Windows



XBOX 360



KANE & LYNCH

DEAD MEN™



PLAYSTATION 3

PSP

Games
for Windows



© 2007 Eidos Interactive Ltd. Kane & Lynch: Dead Men™ Eidos Interactive and the Eidos logo are trademarks of the Eidos group of companies. IO Interactive and the IO logo are trademarks of IO Interactive A/S. All rights reserved. "PLAYSTATION" and "PSP" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Microsoft Games Studio logo, and the Games for Windows logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, the Xbox logo, and the Xbox Live logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.

www.KaneandLynch.com



eidos

THE NUMBERS



1.5 million

Units of *BioShock* shipped for its launch
(source: 2K Games)

1 million

BioShock demo downloads from LIVE in a month
(source: 2K Games)



2 million

Guitar Hero 2 songs sold on LIVE (source: Microsoft)

8 million

Number of users using the Xfire community tool
(source: Xfire)



7 million

LIVE Subscribers
(source: Microsoft)



76 percent

Nintendo's share of the Japanese gaming market
(source: Famitsu)

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER RELEASES

Subject to change

Day	Game	Platform	Day	Game	Platform
2	TimeShift	PC, PS3, 360	16	SimCity Societies	PC
2	Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	Multi		<i>Exclusive unlock codes with every pre-order</i>	
2	Empire at War Gold Edition	PC	16	F.E.A.R.: Perseus Mandate Expansion Pack	PC
2	Dreamworks Triple Adventure Pack	PS2	18	SingStar Next Generation	PS3
2	Scrabble 2007	PC		<i>Pre-order for only R665.06</i>	
2	Chessmaster 11 Grandmaster	PC	18	Eye of Judgement	PS3
2	Totally Spies	PC, PS2	18	EyeToy Play: Astro Zoo	PS2
2	Fashion Designer	PC	18	Buzz Junior: Monsters	PS2
2	Zoo Pet Vet 2	PC	18	Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	PS2
2	Horsez 2	PC, PS2	18	Syphon Filter: Logans Shadow	PSP
2	Ascaron Collection 1	PC	19	Boogie	PS2
2	Ascaron Collection 2	PC	19	Half-Life 2: The Orange Box	PS3
2	FIFA Manager 08	PC	20	Smarty Pants	Wii
2	The Sims 2: Teen Style Stuff Pack	PC	22	Ratchet & Clank: Tools of Destruction	PS3
2	Legend of Spyro: Eternal Night	PS2	22	Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	PS3, 360
2	Phantasy Star Universe: Ambition of the Illuminus	PC, PS2	22	SOCOM: Tactical Strike	PSP
2	Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Anniversary	PSP, 360	22	Bladestorm: The 100 Years of War	PS3, 360
2	Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Anniversary (Platinum)	PS2	23	World In Conflict	360
6	EA Playground	Wii	23	Catz 2007	Multi
6	The Sims 2: Cataway	PSP	23	Dogz 2007	Multi
8	Lair	PS3	23	Horsez 2	Wii
8	Jericho	PS3, PC	23	My Word Coach	Wii
8	Buzz: The Hollywood Quiz	PS2	23	Blazing Angels II: Secret Missions of WWII	PS3
8	SingStar R&B	PS2	23	Guitar Hero III	PS2, 360
8	Dirty Dancing	PC	23	Bee Movie	Multi
9	WWE Smackdown! vs. RAW 08	360	23	The Golden Compass	Multi
9	Mass Effect	360	23	Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	PC, 360
	<i>Pre-order for only R499.95. Save R100!</i>		23	My Horse and Me	PS3
9	Crash of the Titans	360	25	Sonic Rivals 2	PSP
9	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare Collector's Edition	PC	25	Company of Heroes: Opposing Force	PC
	<i>Pre-order for R345.46</i>		30	Dancing Stage Universe	360
9	Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	PS3, 360	30	KUF111 Circle of Doom	360
9	LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga	Multi	30	Piñata Party	360
9	Naruto: Rise of the Ninja	360	30	Hell Boy	360
9	International Cricket Captain	PSP	30	Pro Evolution Soccer 7	360
9	Empire Earth III	PC	30	Haze	PS3
13	The Simpsons Game	PS3			
15	Army of Two	X360, 360			
15	High School Musical 2	PS2			
16	F.E.A.R. Files	360			
16	Scene It	360			
16	Assassin's Creed	PC			
	<i>Pre-order for only R257.36</i>				
16	Assassin's Creed	PS3, 360			
16	Beowulf	Multi			
16	Crysis	PC			
	<i>Free t-shirt with every pre-order (while stocks last)</i>				



Wii **Starter Pack**

Only R3299.95

Includes Wii™ Console, 2 Remotes, Wii™ Sports & Wii™ Play

Save R200

Free 24hr Delivery!*



Release list and special offers provided by www.kalahari.net



Day	Game	Platform
TBA	Juiced 2	PS3
TBA	Conan	PS3
TBA	NHL 2K8	PS2, PS3
TBA	Cars 2	PS2
TBA	Avatar: The Burning Earth	PS2
TBA	Aqua Teen Hunger Force Zombie Ninja Pro-Am	PS2
TBA	California Games	PS2, PSP
TBA	Ben 10	PS2, PSP, DS
TBA	Lassie	PS2
TBA	Caspar Scare School	PS2
TBA	Sno Cross 2	PS2
TBA	Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	PSP
TBA	WWE Smackdown! vs. RAW 08	PS2, PS3, PSP
TBA	Squad Commander (Warhammer)	PSP
TBA	Yu Gi Oh: GX Duel Evolution	PSP
TBA	Silent Hill: Origins	PSP
TBA	Castelvania: The Dracula X Chronicles	PSP
TBA	Pro Evolution Soccer 8	PSP, DS
TBA	Hard Rock Casino	PSP
TBA	Ultimate Mortal Kombat	DS
TBA	Cocoto Racer	DS
TBA	Megaman Star Force: Pegasus	DS
TBA	Megaman Star Force: Leo	DS
TBA	Megaman Star Force: Dragon	DS
TBA	Dead and Furious	DS
TBA	Steel Horizon	DS
TBA	Powershot Pinball	DS
TBA	Indoor Sports	Wii
TBA	BlackSite: Area 51	360, PC
TBA	Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends	360
TBA	Sid Meier's Civilization Complete Edition	PC
TBA	Unreal Tournament 2007	PC
TBA	Yu Gi Oh: Online Duel Evolution - Duel Pass - E Hero	PC

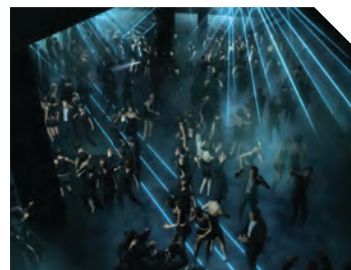
EVENTS

Go to www.langames.co.za for more information

Date	Name	Location
2	ECLIPS-COMPUTERS (LAN)	No Venue Specified
2	Carnage. LAN	Cape Town
2	Freestate lan	Kroonstad
3	INSOMNIA	Joburg
10	Mayhem	Boksburg
16	Organised Chaos	Cape Town
17	Liberty	Benoni
23	SICORP LAN	Cape Town
23	MPLD	Pretoria
30	AC Projects LAN	Bellville
30	L.A.N.ing SuX	Pretoria

CAPTION OF THE MONTH

Every month we'll choose a boring, odd or peculiar screenshot from any random game and write a bad caption for it. Your job is to come up with a better caption. The winner will get a free game from Vivendi Universal Games. Send your captions to ed@nag.co.za with the subject [November Caption].



NOVEMBER CONTEST

NAG'S LAME ATTEMPT:

"The party took a bad turn when the laser security system malfunctioned and disintegrated all the guests."



OCTOBER WINNER

"Floor it, Mr Frodo!"
- Dave Edwards

vivendi
GAMES

RULES: [1] If you don't use the correct subject line, your mail will be automatically filtered by our spam software and deleted. [2] If you think sending in 20 captions for the same screenshot is how you want to play the system, then put them all in the same mail or we'll keep the top one and delete the rest. You probably won't win anyway because you can't follow simple instructions. And people who can't follow simple instructions don't deserve to win things. [3] Obey all posted speed limits. [4] Never run with scissors. [5] There is no spoon. [6] Don't tell me what I can't do!



WE NEED A HERO

Every month, in honour of our favourite TV show, *Heroes*, we'll hide the mysterious mark of the heroes somewhere in the magazine. It could be in a screenshot, on a piece of hardware or anywhere, really. Find it and send an e-mail to ed@nag.co.za with the subject line [Heroes November]. We'll announce a random winner next month and that person will win a GM 2600 Joystick valued at R300 from Trust!



LAST MONTH'S WINNER

Tyron Weir, p71



Trust
WWW.TRUST.COM

Wii 
Sports Pack
Only **R2899.95**
Includes Wii™ Console,
Remote & Wii™ Sports
Free 24hr Delivery!*

*24hr delivery while stocks last. Terms and conditions apply.



kalahari.net
PC | PS2 | PS3 | XBOX 360

TOKYO GAME SHOW

AH, JAPAN. NEON BILLBOARDS, Hello Kitty, eating with sticks, nubile schoolgirlies in nautical-chic frocks getting friendly with tentacles – and of course, the annual Tokyo Game Show. Now in its eleventh year, 2007 saw TGS opening its doors from 20-23 September for an extended Four-day entertainment extravaganza, and reeling in a record-breaking 193,040 giddy geeks.

Under the banner "Link up, Reach out, To the world", TGS 2007 gobbled up an area of some 54,000 square metres of the Makuhari Messe convention centre in Chiba City. In addition to a glut of Japanese and other Asian exhibitors, the expo featured industry representatives from all over the planet, including the USA, UK, Ukraine, Australia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Finland, France, and Russia, spanning 1,735 booths on the show floor. It's not rAge, but hey, it tried.



GLITZ, GLAMOUR, AND GOLD STARS

The prestigious Japan Game Awards 2007 took place during TGS, with two titles jostling in joint first place for the coveted Game of the Year miniature gong. The first of these, Nintendo's *Wii Sports*, was acclaimed by the Computer Entertainment Suppliers Association for having "totally revamped the image of traditional game consoles", as well as attracting new demographic sectors, most especially women and seniors. The second game, the enormously popular Capcom PSP title *Monster Hunter Portable 2nd* received commendation for being "more than a game". Yeah, we've never heard of it, either.

GRAND AWARD:

- *Wii Sports* (Wii)
- *Monster Hunter Portable 2nd* (PSP)

AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE:

- *Wii Sports* (Wii)
- *Okami* (PS2)
- *Gundam Musou* (PS3)
- *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* (Wii)
- *Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker* (DS)
- *New Super Mario Bros.* (DS)
- *Blue Dragon* (Xbox 360)
- *Pokémon Diamond Version / Pearl Version* (DS)
- *Metal Gear Solid Portable Ops* (PSP)
- *Monster Hunter Portable 2nd* (PSP)
- *Ryu ga Gotoku 2* (PS2)

- *Professor Layton and the Curious Village* (DS)
- *Lost Planet: Extreme Condition* (Xbox 360)

BEST SALES AWARD:

- *Pokémon Diamond Version / Pearl Version* (DS)

GLOBAL AWARD JAPANESE PRODUCT:

- *Dead Rising* (Xbox 360)

GLOBAL AWARD FOREIGN PRODUCT:

- *Gears of War* (Xbox 360)

SPECIAL AWARD:

- *The Idolmaster* (Xbox 360)
- *Love and Berry Dress up and Dance! Collection* (DS)

107



SEISMIC!

Shortly after the TGS opening ceremony, Sony's Kaz Hirai trotted to the main stage to hold forth on all sorts of grand stuff in a keynote address entitled, "A Look at Expanding Our Business Strategy Toward New Growth: The Expanding PlayStation World."

Finally confirming rampant rumours six months after reaching a cooperation agreement with Immersion Corporation, Hirai announced the imminent release of the new wireless Dual Shock 3 rumble-enabled controller for the PlayStation 3. Apparently the company has reconsidered its supercilious 2006 dismissal of force feedback technology as "last-gen" - although it was later confirmed that the Dual Shock 3 uses the very same rumble technology as its predecessor. Well, as the bland adage goes, if it ain't broke...or everybody just hates the SIXAXIS, as the case may be. In addition to rumble, the new controller will feature the same tilt-sensing technology as the SIXAXIS. Pricing details have yet to emerge, but it was revealed that the controller would initially be sold separately to the console. Will it eventually replace the maligned PS3 controller altogether? "Nothing has been decided yet," Sony communications drone, Kimberly Oztman, prevaricated. "Stay tuned." That's a yes, then.

Hirai also mentioned that Sony would be reducing its next-gen console's manufacturing overheads by using smaller semiconductors and decreasing the number of components in the system. But more importantly, would this translate into a subsequent retail price reduction? "No surprise in this regard this year," said Hirai. "Price is a very important aspect, but at the same time the urgent matter is to what extent we can further enrich the software titles," - corporate spin for, "no lol."

Finally, the indefatigable spokesman announced the delay of the PlayStation Home metaverse project until a somewhat nebulous "Spring 2008". During a post-keynote Q&A session, he elaborated, saying, "We want this to be a worldwide service, and we want to make sure that we have a range of services which can be satisfactory to our users throughout the world. So we decided to delay the service's launch date. Please be patient in this regard."

MORE GAMES THAN YOU COULD SHAKE A KATANA AT

POPULOUS DS [DS]

Peter Molyneux and Bullfrog's 1989 seminal god game is to be born anew on Nintendo's handheld courtesy of EA Japan, previously responsible for the recent DS port of *SimCity*. The new incarnation will feature a story mode, as well as multiplayer head-to-head battling.



NINJA GAIDEN 2 [360]

Ryu Hayabusa is back, and this time, he's pissed off. No longer content with such effeminate wannabe judo posturing as punching, kicking, and limp-wristed swordplay, he's going for the eyes with scythes, strap-on talons, bladed shoes, fireballs, and all sorts of other gruesome accoutrements of death. Expect full-body dismemberment and gratuitously unfeasible gouts of blood and guts.



FINAL FANTASY XI: WINGS OF THE GODDESS [PS2 | PC | 360]

Square Enix trotted out a few new screenshots and a promotional video of the upcoming fourth *Final Fantasy XI* expansion, although they didn't really reveal much. A release date was announced, however – the game will ship to Stateside retailers on 20 November, with public sales and online service commencing two days later.



METAL SLUG 7 [DS]

SNK's classic side-scrolling run 'n' gun romper is due for an all-new all-exclusive mobile deployment on the Nintendo DS, with an early build on display at the show. It's probably a safe bet that the Game Boy Advance's *Metal Slug Advance*, long suspected to be vaporware, has been chucked.



KINGDOM HEARTS [PSP | DS | MOBILE]

Three new installments in Square Enix's Disney crossover were announced, including *Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep* for the PSP, the somewhat inscrutably titled *Kingdom Hearts: 358/2* for DS, and *Kingdom Hearts: Coded* for mobiles. Veteran *KH* designer, Tetsuya Nomura, hinted that the three games have some sort of connection to an as-yet-unannounced future title in the series.



DUEL LOVE [DS]

Since its release, Nintendo's DS has played leering host to several "feel 'em up" games, where the handheld's stylus and touch (ooh!) screen are used to virtually grope anime-styled ladies. Well, now women will enjoy some vicarious slap and tickle of their own with Namco Bandai's *Duel Love*. The demo on show offered a minigame where players got to, erm, rub sweat off one of two emo-chic Asian men. Well, different strokes for different folks (see what we did there?).



IKARUGA [360]

Considered by many to be the definitive shooter of the last console generation, *Ikaruga* is all set to warp onto the Xbox LIVE Arcade roster. Featuring a unique polarity-switching game mechanic, this former Dreamcast / GameCube vertical scroller is quite possibly one of the most fiendishly difficult games we've ever played. Pre-empt the inevitable and buy a spare controller.



ZACK & WIKI: QUEST FOR BARBAROS' TREASURE [WII]

In between throwing gold-wrapped chocolate bars at passers-by, Capcom showed off this mildly hallucinogenic adventure-platform-puzzler starring a pirate apprentice (Zack) and his simian sidekick (Wiki). And apparently it's quite the brainbox-boggler. "There are puzzles where, if you don't look properly at the hints in the start, you're going to be in trouble," producer Hironobu Takeshita told GameLife. "All the answers that you need to solve the puzzles are there on the screen. There are some people who say they don't understand the puzzles, but really, they're not paying enough attention." Forewarned is forearmed.



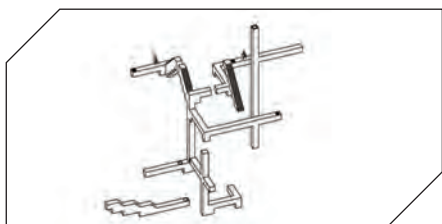
SECRET AGENT CLANK [PSP]

Ironically, not all that secret at all following two widely-reported pre-show leaks, Sony confirmed that Ratchet's itty-bitty accomplice will be getting his own spin-off game. From the developers of the exceedingly awesome *Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters*, *Secret Agent Clank* sees the titular robot donning a tricked-out tuxedo and joining forces with bumbling wannabe hero, Captain Qwark.



ECHOCHROME [PS3]

Fleetingly unveiled at E3 earlier this year, Sony's queer Escher- and Reutersvård-inspired geometric puzzler was available as a single level demo for hands-on head-scratching at TGS. Featuring minimalist graphics and an entirely unique gameplay mechanic, Echochrome's navigation philosophy is all about spatial relativity – if you can't get past what you see, rotate what you're seeing and try it from another angle.

**TIME HOLLOW [DS]**

In this adventure game from Konami, players take the role of Horo Tokio, a 17-year-old high school student with some sort of magic pen that lets him see into and manipulate the past. Using this marvellous device, Horo must set things right not only in his own life, but those of his chums. We can only imagine them pitching this in a boardroom, while simultaneously pumping the air full of barbiturates and LSD.

**BITE-SIZED**

Having previously stirred up a self-righteously indignant hornet's nest over the perceived racism of its upcoming game, *Resident Evil 2*, Capcom finally announced that the game was not, as assumed, set in Africa, but in Haiti – you know, the shuffling epicentre of all things zombie. Oh, so Africa isn't good enough now, huh? That's so racist.

Square Enix senior vice president Michihiko Sasaki revealed that his company is looking to sign a cooperative publishing deal with a US partner. Bemoaning the overwhelming popularity of action games, Sasaki admitted that, "Our strength is in role-playing games and fantasy titles, so it is a bit difficult to appeal to the US market."

Topically, the recent release of Square Enix's latest franchise darling, *Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII*, has been attributed for a concomitant boost in Sony PSP sales, pushing the little Sony to the top of not only the portable sales charts, but the total console sales charts for the country. During TGS 07 week, PSP sales surged ahead to 95,487 units sold, trailed by the DS Lite with 79,974, Wii at 26,181, PlayStation 2 with 13,128, PlayStation 3 with 13,101, and the Xbox 360 peaking at a rather wretched 1,243.

Meanwhile, SEGA is apparently confident about its upcoming crossover release, *Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games*, with corporate director Masanoa Maeda predicting the title will push four-million units into living rooms worldwide.

With the little blue dude hitting the two decade mark in December, *Mega Man* producer and character designer Keiji Inafune was on hand to wax nostalgic about the series – and his own personal industry history. "It may be the 20th anniversary for the *Mega Man* series, but it's also the 20th anniversary for myself as a game developer," he said. "It was the first title that I was involved in when I joined Capcom, and I've really been in the industry together with the series. It was the *Mega Man* series that taught me how to make videogames, like what kind of points had to be detailed, and what kind of points had to be watched out for. I'm often called the creator of *Mega Man* or the father of *Mega Man*, but it's really the *Mega Man* series that created me." Awww.

In the wake of foaming excitement about the upcoming PS3 Eye-controlled card battler, *Eye of Judgement*, Sony showcased a clutch of other games scheduled for download alongside the peripheral's October release. These include puzzlers *Operation: Creature Feature* and *Trials of Topoq*, as well as the tech demo-esque *Mesmerize* and mini-game peddler *Tori-Emaki*.

With an upcoming release timed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the franchise, Konami whipped the dedicated community in a frothy frenzy after announcing a contest for the new *Contra 4* mobile excursion, offering fans the chance to "develop a creative new character that demonstrates the true meaning of the classic *Contra* game". All finalists will receive a souvenir T-shirt, mention in the credits, and see their designs on the company's Website, while the lucky winner will additionally receive some sort of impressive design award. Scrambling for your pencil crayons? Sorry, the contest closed on 1 October. **NAG**



MIKTAR'S MEANDERINGS

by Miktar Dracon

YOUR GAMING HOROSCOPE FOR 2008 - PART ONE

(With sincere apologies to Mr Yankovic)

JUST TO RAMBLE IN the preamble, you may find it inconceivable (or at the very least a bit unlikely) that the relative position of the planets and the stars could have a special deep significance or meaning that exclusively applies to only you and what games you play. However, let me give you my professional assurance that these forecasts and predictions are all based on solid, scientific, documented gaming evidence. Therefore, you would have to be some kind of moron not to realise that every single one of them is absolutely true. *(Part Two in the December issue)*

AQUARIUS

January 21 - February 19

Platform compatibility: Everything except the PlayStation 3

Stop thinking of classic games gone by; you cannot relive your youth (if you think you can, just try and finish *Doom* or *Quake* now without getting annoyed). Get in on some party games, start playing online more - stretch your virtual gaming wings a little. You like to have fun playing games, but you're not sure where the fun is right now. Consider yourself a cause worth fighting for, and fight to have more fun playing games. You'll have to try to avoid blatant imitations and clones: you'll never really enjoy them as much as you could. Hype is making you avoid certain titles unnecessarily. It's okay to get fragged.

PISCES

February 20 - March 20

Platform compatibility: PC

Avoid Virgo or Leo gamers; they're just going to piss you off with their know-it-all enthusiasm for all things gaming or their abrasive attitude towards gaming. Don't bother with multiplayer games; you know you cannot stand being called a noob. Go get lost in some single-player experiences instead. When you're done with a game, uninstall it and move on. There are some very interesting and mysterious games online - little indie Flash games just waiting for you to find them. Did you know the Japanese have an arcade game that involves ramming the finger of a giant hand into what appears to be a butt? Crazy.

ARIES

March 21 - April 20

Platform compatibility: The underdog such as the Wii as well as the Xbox 360

Let's face it - you like action. You like to be in the thick of explosions and epic clashes of ultimate proportions, as long as you're numero uno, the main man - the Master Chief as it were. But you won't listen to advice when it comes to which games are good, which games you should play, which games people think might suit you. Since you like a challenge, try to challenge yourself - go out and play something you've never played, try a genre you might never have tried before by yourself. Don't just wait around for your next gaming fix; you could be playing something right now. Stop posting on forums, you don't belong there.

TAURUS

April 21 - May 21

Platform compatibility: PC (and perhaps one day, Xbox 360)

You'll never find gaming nirvana in increased polygon counts. What you gonna do? Blog about it? You're going to wake up, play some games, and then go back to sleep. Try to go outside a bit more; nature exists in nature as well as in games that render nature using DirectX 10. Don't stress, take your time to ponder what game you should devote yourself to next; something will appear that you'll be naturally attracted to (if you can believe in a world after *Crysis*). Learn to lock your door when you don't want to be disturbed when saving the world from alien invaders, nerd.

GEMINI

May 22 - June 21

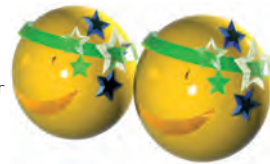
Platform compatibility: Anything that plays games You think you're a PC gamer, but you're actually just a gamer who's being platform specific due to many years of self-inflicted ignorance. For someone who likes novelty and the unusual as well as variety in life, you keep playing the same games in the same genres on the same platform. Why do you tie yourself down like that? Afraid of a little learning? School wasn't very kind to you, was it? It was too boring, too samey and too linear. Start using that CPU in your head. Dive into a pile of games you've been avoiding and throw in a few you never thought you'd play just for variety - you can handle playing several games at the same time, switching from one to the other when you get tired of what you're doing. If something doesn't interest you, drop it as if it's hot and act cool.

CANCER

June 22 - July 22

Platform compatibility: PC with a dash of PlayStation 2

Gaming is your hobby and you've been neglecting it, haven't you? You like hobbies and as far as gaming goes, it's a damn nice hobby. Nevertheless, you also like romance, children, your home, your country (*d'origine* or adopted), parties... there's just too much to do! The stars might contain advice, but when it comes to advice, good or bad, you just don't wanna hear it and you know it. However, you're being so caught up in everything else that you might start feeling a little aggravated by your own lack of gaming. If you want to game, but you don't give yourself the time to game, that technically means you failed at being a gamer. Can you live with yourself knowing that? **NAG**



ASUS DRW-2014L1T

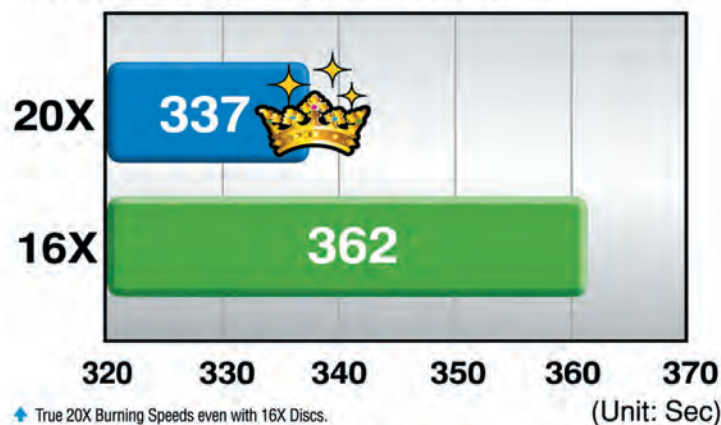
True 20X DVD±R

Fast and Creative Disc Labeling with LightScribe Technology

Bored waiting for your DVD disks to finish burning? Well, ASUS, provider of high-performance optical drives has come up with a solution. The new ASUS DRW-2014L1T internal DVD rewriter with LightScribe technology can make burning DVDs a breeze. Together with a high speed SATA interface, you can expect to enjoy five times faster data transfer rates than the current DMA33 standards.

Fast Data Speeds and Creative Disc Labeling

The DRW-2014L1T is able to write DVD ROMs at an exceedingly fast speed of 20X, even on 16X discs - saving you waiting time. What's more, it also has LightScribe technology to provide you with customized disc labeling. After the data has been burnt onto the LightScribe disc, you only have to flip the disc over to write the graphic and text on the label side and voila, simple professional-grade labels in no time.



QuieTrack - Quiet and Stable

The innovative ASUS exclusive QuieTrack technology dampens drive noise in every conceivable fashion while improving stability for quiet operations.



Auto Vibration Reducing System (AVRS)

The AVRS technology is designed to minimize the vibration caused by the spindle motor and resonance between components as well as the drive and PC cases. AVRS is designed to reduce vibration and noise induced by unbalanced mass of rotating machinery.



◆ AVRS reduces the chance of unbalanced discs - lowering noise and enhancing readability and playability.



"Last words are for fools who haven't said enough!"

THE DOMAIN OF THE BASILISK

by Anton Lines

MORE THAN YOU THINK

MY MOTHER NEVER TOLD me to stop playing games. I was lucky. As the age of the home computer was born, most kids of my generation had to grapple with their parents' fear of the unknown. Commercially available technology has, in a quarter of a century, advanced faster than virtually anything else in human history has, and it's been a frightening ride for some.

Psychologists have since refuted most of the initial concerns. Gaming has been shown to enhance spatial perception and hand-eye coordination, foster lateral problem solving, and assist in social development. However, I see no reason to rehash these benefits – for most readers of this magazine they should be obvious. Columns explaining "Why gaming is good for you" are written mostly for non-gamers in the hope that they'll see the light and stop harassing their children. However, there are a few advantages to playing games that are, I think, generally overlooked even by gamers themselves. This will therefore be a column explaining why gaming has taught you even more than you think.

Essentially, the way you learn a game can be extended to the way you learn any other skill. The key difference is that a game is designed to be fun throughout, while 'real-life' skills often involve a degree of

unpleasant 'hard work' before the benefits can be reaped. By playing a game, you form a model of your own development without it feeling like work at all. Armed with this knowledge, you'll find yourself far more confident and certain of your direction when attempting to learn other skills.

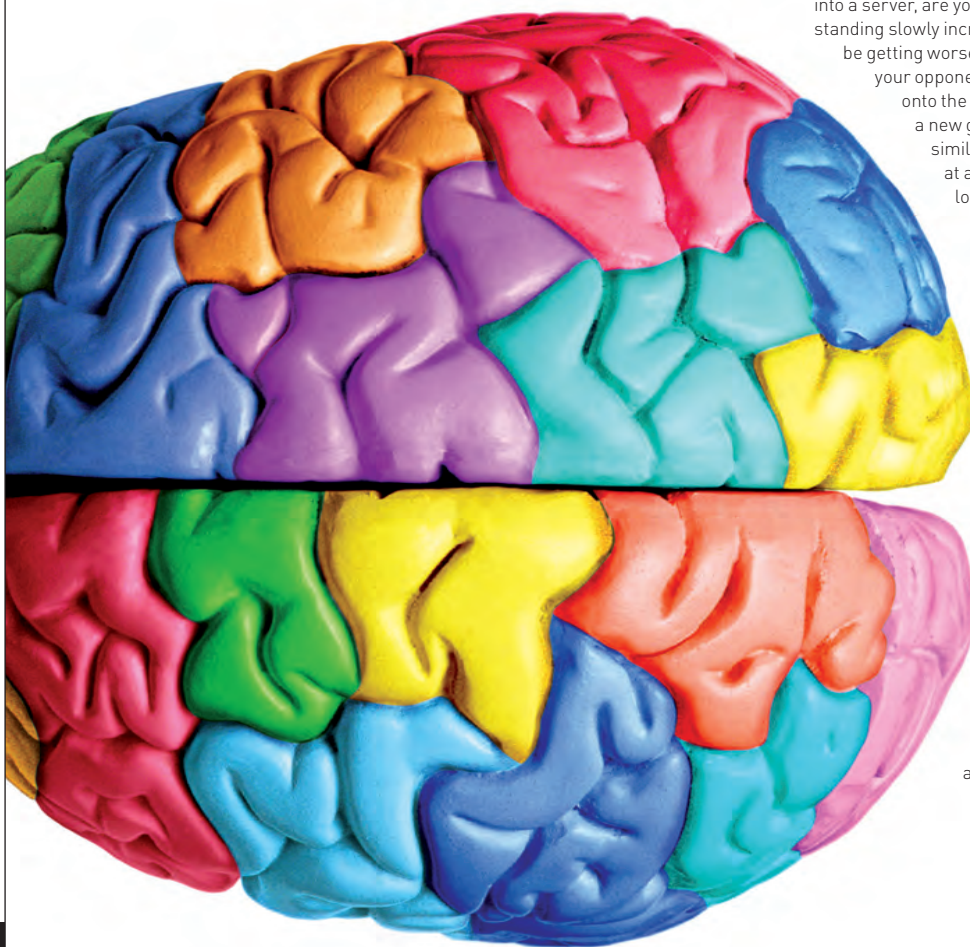
Take a few moments to analyse your own gaming experiences, and a few things should start to emerge. For example, most people improve faster when playing against or alongside someone at a similar skill level (the same reason why 'study buddies' are encouraged at school). Another observation is that everyone reaches a saturation point after some time. After this point is reached, 'just playing' is no longer enough and a player must consciously try to improve from there on.

Dig a little deeper and you'll discover other 'real-world' techniques imbedded in gaming. Watching one's own demos/replays is akin to studying one's past exam papers, financial statements, or poetry. Tackling a complex task as a series of smaller, manageable segments is somewhat like going through the levels of a game and finding all the necessary power-ups before attempting the final boss.

But most important – and not as obvious – is the exposure gaming gives you to your own learning curve. When you and your friends hop into a server, are you the first to lead the scoreboard or does your standing slowly increase with time? Does it feel like you might actually be getting worse? On the other hand, if you're the first to lead, do your opponents tend to catch up to you quickly, or do you hold onto the lead for a long time? Whenever you start playing a new game, you'll probably find your experience will be similar. Sure, the more you do it the better you'll get at adapting to the new conditions, but overall – if you look hard enough – you'll be able to find a pattern.

The importance of this knowledge is not to be underestimated. Modern neurobiology holds that with the right training, and enough time, most human beings can learn any human skill. Mozart might have been able to play the piano perfectly at age ten, but anyone else can learn to play (or even compose) just as well. Of course, most of us will die of old age before ever getting to that level, but if you simply want to be a concert pianist, all you have to do is keep at it. The greatest cause of failure is lack of perseverance. Moreover, lack of perseverance is usually due to a lack of motivation.

Knowing your own learning curve means you'll know when that slump is coming, how to work through it, and how long it's likely to last. Alternatively, perhaps you'll know that though you start out ahead, you can't afford to slack off because you'll find yourself losing ground after a while. Being prepared for your unique vicissitudes prevents you from being distracted by the learning process itself. It keeps you focussed on the goal. And if gaming can teach you all that, it certainly is the hobby of a lifetime. **NAG**





MSI
MICRO-STAR INTERNATIONAL

innovation with style



MSI Unique Weapon



• 2% ~ 10% / 6-Scale
Dynamic Overclocking Performance



Unsurpassed Weapon

Best Price/Performance Choice for DirectX 10 Game

NX8600GTS-T2D256E-HD



NX8600GT-T2D256E



NX8500GT-TD256E



- Powered by NVIDIA® GeForce® 8600GTS GPU
- 256MB DDR3 Graphic Memory
- Dual Link DVI & HDCP Support
- High Dynamic-Range(HDR) Support
- PCI Express 16X

- Powered by NVIDIA® GeForce® 8600GT GPU
- 256MB DDR3 Graphic Memory
- Dual-Link DVI for High Resolution Display
- High Dynamic-Range(HDR) Support
- PCI Express 16X

- Powered by NVIDIA® GeForce® 8500GT GPU
- 256MB DDR2 Graphic Memory
- Dual Link DVI Support
- High Dynamic-Range(HDR) Support
- PCI Express 16X

WHERE TO BUY

Pinnacle
MICRO

0861 00 8000

Pinnacle Micro Branches

Midrand 011 265 3000 | Cape Town 021 551 3310 | Durban 031 263 2090

Nelspruit 013 752 2846 | Port Elizabeth 041 365 1088 | East London 043 735 2699

Bloemfontein 051 447 1000 | Windhoek +264 61 249478 | Gaborone +267 393 7477

Lusaka +260 124 1408 | Luanda +222 33 5679 | www.pinnacle.co.za

www.msi.com.tw



DAMMIT
by Megan Hughes

NO WHINE FOR ME, THANKS.

I'VE ALWAYS FOUND CHEESE strangely fascinating. There cannot be too many other foodstuffs in which we encourage bacteria growth and leave to ripen or mature for some time. I suppose we all know - those of us of legal age and or a refined palate that is - that a good wine also requires a couple of years in a cool, dark room before the grape juice is ready for drinking and inducing drunkenness.

However, now it's our favourite industry's turn to endure a taste test by connoisseurs and those not in the know. I don't know if the developers added bacteria to their staff or locked them in a cellar for several years, but the effects of whatever maturation process they used are already clearly visible. Granted, not all developers will have added such love and care to their products, but blue cheese is different to mozzarella.

Obviously, the process is by no means complete, though I thankfully doubt that it ever could be; but it's a feast for the senses to take a peek at this early stage. I wouldn't hesitate to compare it to the giddy excitement parents must feel sending their children off to their first day of high school. Not quite teenagers yet, and no longer really children, it will be a thrill to know how far they have come and imagine what they might make of themselves in future years.

The clearest indicator of maturity breaking the surface, like a poorly disguised pimple, is the attention that new titles are paying to the grey area of morals and values. A topic usually left for bearded philosophers to contemplate, games are now presenting questions of ethics to the average Joe (or Jane in this case). And it's a buffet of variety for the intellectual and emotional out there.

Just pick a new title such as *BioShock*, and your beliefs about your

system of morals and values might be shaken a bit. The main choice offered in the game is whether to kill or cure the Little Sisters. Killing them reaps more rewards for your character than curing them, but the choice becomes exceedingly complex as they talk, play, and cry as little children would. The game forces you to ask questions such as, "Do your actions define you as a person, and does your behaviour towards a pixelated child have any bearing in the real world?"

The Witcher is also promising a 'morally grey' title where every action has some serious side effects that you cannot predict, and are only seen much later on in the game. Knowing that your choice, either way, often leads to the death of an important character, how do you motivate your decision, even to yourself? Is passively doing nothing to stop an event the same as actively getting involved in it?

A fun title that I'm personally looking forward to is *SimCity Societies*. Although it doesn't seem like it will test your morals or ethical beliefs, it does offer a situation where every action has effects (both good and bad). In an attempt to keep your citizens happy, you might build them a bar. Unfortunately, this results in an increase in crime, which reduces your citizens' new level of happiness. Too much alcohol and they won't go to work because of their nasty hangovers. However, close the bar down and everyone is too miserable to work. Sounds like real life to me.

It's strange to think that games, which are ultimately just another form of escapism from reality, are creating fictional situations that cause gamers to think deeply about themselves and the realities they're facing everyday. Of course, if it's all too much for you, you could always comfort yourself with a little cheese and a lot of wine. **NAG**



GAMEPLAYGEAR

GAMING | LIFESTYLE | ACCESSORIES

GEAR UP ON **THE LATEST**
WEAPONS FOR YOUR **MACHINE**



PS3 MOTION SENSING
CONTROLLER

FROM
R329



PS2/PC
CONTROLLER

FROM
R149



HDMI CABLE

FROM
R249



PS2 RACING
WHEEL

FROM
R299

www.GamePlayGear.com



RAMJET

by Walt Pretorius

STEVE, HAROLD AND ROB

I RECENTLY PLAYED *BIOSHOCK*. I finished it in one day. I recently played *Stranglehold*. Once again, I finished it in one day. A while ago, I played *Gears of War* – not quite one day, but close. I look at these facts and I despair because all of these games were fantastic... and dreadfully short. Ah, I can hear the muttered comments already: "What about multiplayer?" Well, to be dead honest, I haven't played any of them via Xbox LIVE for two reasons.

The first reason is that our national telephony provider, which I had a laugh at a few months ago, has still not showed up to install my ADSL. I am not going to go into it, but suffice to say, it's a little annoying. The second reason why I haven't played these games on a multiplayer level, and possibly the reason why I am annoyed with Telkom (rather than enraged), is the fact that I don't actually like playing multiplayer games.

Ah, the collective gasp of disbelief elicited by that statement just caused a small windstorm in Qatar. Seriously, though, I don't like them. Well, actually, that's not true. I like the games. I cannot stand the players.

There are a number of different types of multiplayer gamers. The first, and most common, we shall call Steve the Winner. Of course, as soon as Steve isn't winning, it becomes Steve the Whiner. Steve is generally around 13-23 years old, although his emotional age is closer to that of a newborn fruit fly. Winning is everything to Steve and, while this is okay, it's the way that he rubs your face in every lucky shot he gets that really pisses you off. Steve has the social skill of a dung beetle, and girls find him either creepy or odd. He has never had a date; which explains why, every time you get on the server, Steve is there. The amount of time Steve spends online results in a poor school performance. It's people like Steve who invented l33t speak... Not because they are witty or clever, but because they can't spell. Steve owns a "I 'heart' Anton Lines" button, and thinks that being great at a game is an actual social skill. Competitive gaming is very important to Steve; it has supplanted things like socialisation (face to face, with real people) school and basic hygiene. If one were to rate Steve on a fun experience meter, one to ten, he would get bugger all. Zero. Zip. Nada.

Next, we have Harold the Dude. Harold likes to play games, but only after smoking a huge blunt. Where Steve is serious, Harold is laid back. In a co-op game, Harold is the guy who's always at the back of the group, inflicting accidental team kills and then telling his victims to "Stop stressing, man, it's only a game." He always gets lost and generally makes enough blunders to give his playmates a very hard time. He will also stop playing halfway through a mission. Harold is generally older than Steve, but is probably just as socially inept. He plays games for fun (he lacks the rabid drive that Steve possesses)

and just wants to have a 'jol'. He probably refers to playing a game as "jamming." Fun rating: same as Steve.

Then there's Rob the Perv. He is one of those guys who hasn't learned that multiplayer gaming is not a good pick-up ground, and trawls games for chicks. He hasn't yet realised that using a female character in a game doesn't automatically make the player female, and will spend the whole time sending irritating private messages... most of which are a little off-colour. Rob is probably older than mid-thirties, and once again has the social skill of a snail. He isn't particularly good at the game (his well-developed right arm comes from other activities) and will try to come across as a suave hero even when he can't hit an elephant in the arse with a bazooka at ten paces. Fun value: see Steve, yet again.

These three types make up 95% of the gaming community, with the vast majority of those being Steves. They are no fun to play with because they take the fun out of gaming. These people are either too serious, not serious enough, or just plain creepy.

This brings me, via the scenic route, back to my original point. Why are good, fun, and particularly long single-player games becoming such a rarity? Okay, so the number of people who game and who are not Steves, Harolds or Robs is a minority, but they still exist, and in numbers large enough to matter. Why aren't they being catered for? In the old days, when many gamers started playing games, titles like *Monkey Island* and the original *Doom* and *Quake* offered a brilliant, rewarding, and long single-player experience. I hope that those days might show up again. **NAG**

I IN UR
BASS!
I KILL UR
DOODZ!



WARS CHANGE

TACTICS CHANGE

SOLDIERS DON'T



PC - R299.99
PS3 - R499.99
XBOX - R499.99

CALL OF DUTY 4

MODERN WARFARE

AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 9TH

www.CallOfDuty.com



PLAYSTATION 3



PC
DVD
ROM



ACTIVISION

megarom
www.megarom.co.za
Tel: +27 11 361 4800
sales@megarom.co.za

© 2007 Activision Publishing, Inc. Activision and Call of Duty are registered trademarks and Modern Warfare is a trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. This product contains software technology licensed from Id Software ("Id Technology"). Id Technology © 1999-2007 Id Software, Inc. "PlayStation 2", "PlayStation" and "PLAYSTATION" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. NINTENDO DS IS A TRADEMARK OF NINTENDO. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.

Look & Listen - NAG's preferred gaming retailer.

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

GAUTENG - Fourways: 011 467 1115 • Cresta: 011 476 4142 • Hyde Park: 011 325 4237 • East Rand: 011 823 3642 • Irene: **Now Open**
Clearwater: 011 675 3648 • Lenasia: 011 852 3231 • Atterbury: 012 991 6626 • Menlyn: 012 368 1080 • Greenstone: 011 524 0049
Soweto (Maponya Mall): 011 938 4091 **Now Open** • LIMPOPO - Tzaneen: 015 307 4371 **Now Open** • **DURBAN** - Pavilion: 031 265 1600
NORTH WEST - Rustenburg: 014 537 3466 • **MPUMALANGA** - Nelspruit: 013 752 4524 • Witbank: 013 692 4530 **Now Open**
FREE STATE - Bloemfontein: 051 430 0313 **Now Open** • **WESTERN CAPE** - Cavendish: 021 683 1810 • Century City: 021 551 4647
Willowbridge: 021 914 0760 • Worcester: 023 342 1502

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za. Open 'til 10.30pm, 7 days a week.

White stocks last. E&OE. Prices and availability subject to change at the discretion of the supplier.



Look & Listen
For the Fans

The background of the entire page is a dramatic, high-contrast image from the game Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare. It depicts a night-time battle scene with a large, bright explosion or fire in the center, casting a long, intense light across the dark, smoky sky. In the foreground, the silhouettes of soldiers and military equipment are visible against the bright light. The title 'CALL OF DUTY 4' is rendered in a large, metallic, blue-tinted font with a weathered, battle-damaged appearance. Below it, 'MODERN WARFARE' is written in a smaller, similar font. The overall mood is gritty and action-packed.

CALL OF DUTY 4

MODERN WARFARE™

THE DIRTY JOB OF PEACE AND HARMONY

A Russian nationalist joins forces with a Middle-Eastern terrorist to help usher Russia back to its old ways. Since they don't plan to do this peacefully, the cavalry is called in. Thus starts *Call of Duty 4* and heralds the return of Infinity Ward as its developer. World War II is far behind us and the fight is right now, with the latest in modern weapons and war theatres. In other words, this is a *Call of Duty* fan's wet dream and it might soon be everyone else's.

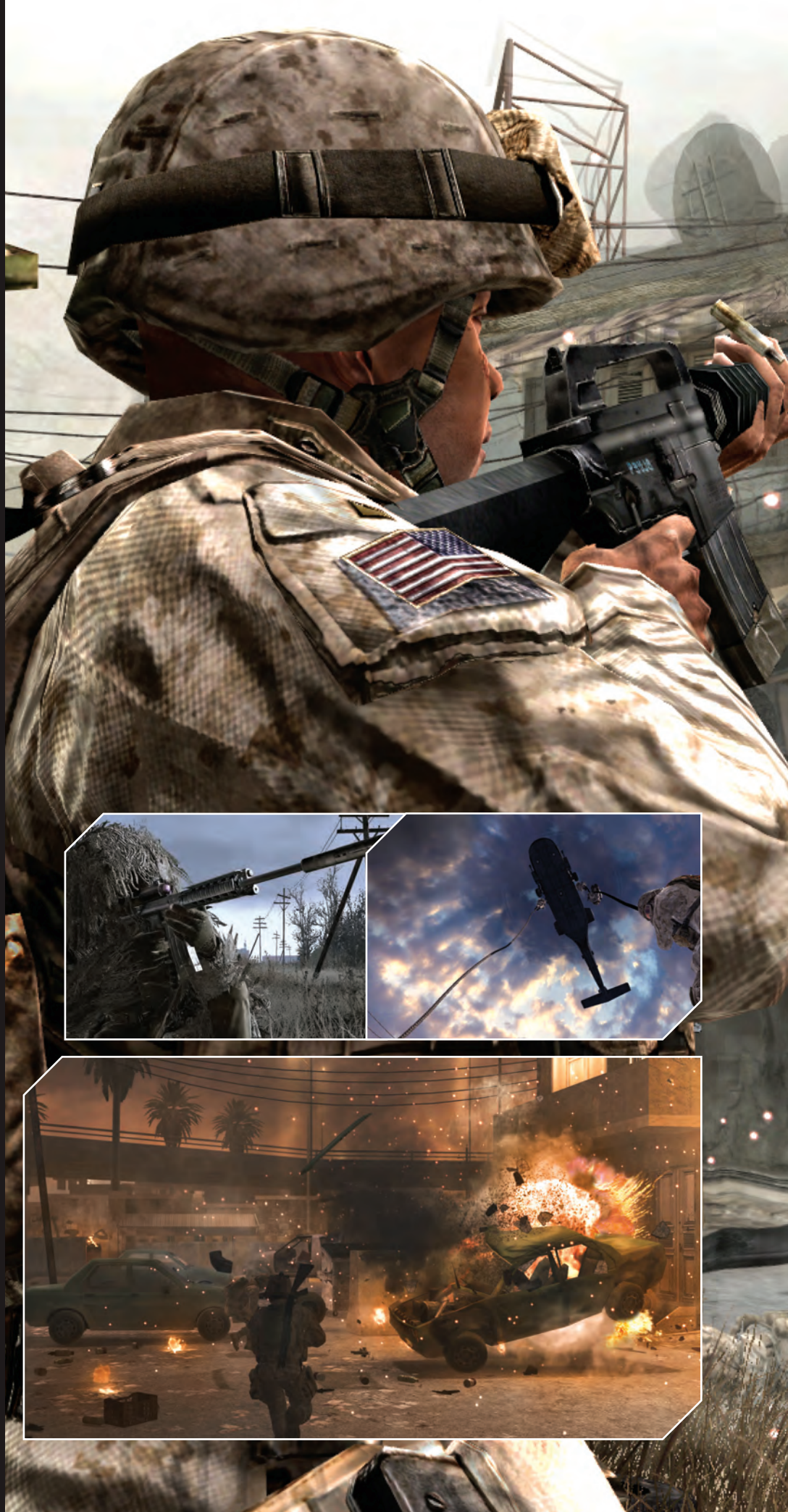


INFINITY WARD DOESN'T CONSIDER this the fourth game. It's not that the studio, responsible for the first two *Call of Duty* titles is looking down on *Call of Duty 3*. But that was developed by a third party and even fans agree that as far as the *COD* series goes, it wasn't the best. It wasn't quintessentially *Call of Duty*, a game that has dominated the war shooter genre ever since it came into being. There have been pretenders to the throne. There have been a few other games that have tried to take the crown, to do what *Call of Duty* does. But nothing really has – not the third-party games carrying its name. If you will, *Call of Duty* and Infinity Ward need each other. Granted, the developer can go on and do other games, but this is their pride and joy. Even the demo code first unveiled to us was named *COD 3*. The real third game was just a gap filler – something to keep the fans and Activision's banker happy until the next decisive chapter.

Decisive it will be. For years, action shooters based on wars have found themselves in a bit of a rut. The more cinematic titles seemed destined to stick to World War II, while the technical games targeted modern combat. The games that have broken across this barrier have relied on multiplayer to get them there. This is not just a question of design. The fans are often hostile to the idea and when *Call of Duty 4* revealed that it would be set in today's wars instead of the Allied forces trying to stop the Nazi war machine, fans were naturally skeptical. Today's warfare is quite different to the storm-and-hold tactics that defined combat sixty years ago. Games based on the ill-fated Vietnam war couldn't seem to translate the action and pace of their WWII counterparts. Why would *COD 4* be any different? How can joining a handful of soldiers – perhaps only two or three at a time – create the same epic feel that we got from the genre so far?

Obviously by now that is not a concern anymore. Unless you have been living under a rock or are reading this in a dentist's office, you know that *COD 4* is the next big thing everyone is talking about. Most of that could be credited to the game's incredible visuals, but if you've watched any of the in-game videos or been lucky enough to see a level unfold in front of your eyes, the future is clear. *Call of Duty 4* is based on current times. A Russian nationalist called Zakhaev has decided his homeland is better off going back to its old Cold War ways. Realising that the powers that be there and elsewhere won't be keen on the idea, he forms an alliance with Middle-Eastern combatant Al-Asad and helps stage a coup in that region. These two, along with their two right-hand men, become known as the Four Horsemen. British and American intelligence have been monitoring the situation and they mobilise their forces to take care of this new threat. Those forces naturally include you.

Call of Duty 4 leaves behind the story-telling tradition of the first games. *COD 3* also broke with tradition by telling a long campaign story where several character plots interlaced. That was possible because the third game was based in the same part of Europe. *COD 4* will take gamers all over the world and follow the stories of two soldiers in the SAS and US Marine Corps,



DUCK THE BULLETS

The promise has been made so many times before, but real bullet penetration has remained mostly a pipe dream when it comes to action titles. Sure, some games did it a little – such as shooting through a thin sheet of wood or using a powerful sniper rifle that can penetrate sandbags – but none really brought new tricks to the party. *Call of Duty 4* finally sets a benchmark here that other games will hopefully follow. The engine can calculate bullet penetration for a lot of situations, which means that bullets will go through nearly anything. That does depend on what you plan to shoot through and which weapon you are brandishing, but a high-powered assault rifle's bullets will go through thin walls while more powerful guns, say the mounted gun on a gunship, will tear through everything. Obviously this goes both ways, so cover is not what it used to be. Forget about avoiding bullets from behind an overturned table or even a seemingly suitable garden wall. The enemy can find you and if their bullets won't reach, their grenades might. The feature is carried over with great effect to multiplayer, where after a while the best kind of cover is to run.



Sergeant John "Soap" MacTavish and Sergeant Paul Jackson, as they go after the Four Horsemen. Thanks to the invention of helicopters and other transport vehicles, our fighting men will hop the globe and be dropped into all kinds of nasty situations. A level recently demoed to us took place in a volatile Middle-Eastern city. It oozed influences like *Black Hawk Down* with RPGs flying just over your head and gunfire blooming out of windows and from roofs while you duck and dodge through smoky ruins and enemy bullets.

Here *Call of Duty 4's* graphical achievement becomes very obvious. The game has been in development since *COD 2's* ended, so Infinity Ward has had a lot of time to refine the engine, get the bugs out and add much more polish. The results are incredible particle effects, even more incredible sound, stunning water, exceptional character models and highly satisfying death animations. The latter is a combination between rag doll and set animations. *COD 4* is a combination of motion-captured movement and hand-animated grace. One of the creepiest sensations while watching that particular level came from the falling enemy combatants, who slumped over as their life force left them in suitably non-dramatic but unnerving fashion. It was very clear that that guy just died. We've all killed a lot of virtual soldiers in the *COD* series and other war games, but nothing resembles this. Attention to detail was clearly at the forefront of Infinity Ward's vision and it shows – right down to the individual shoelaces on the soldiers' boots and the mud flying past your face.

The fact of the matter is that *Call of Duty* is one of the best action series in gaming today and *Call of Duty 4* is the best in that series. At the very least, if it isn't, we'll be the first in line to cry and wail in front of Infinity Ward's offices. A large amount of research went into developing the game, such as the usual study of weapons and tactics in the field. A lot of work has gone into pushing the modern elements of warfare, including breach methods and jaw-dropping night-vision effects. Apart from the two main characters, the game will also include a prequel section based fifteen years in the past, as well as numerous cameo sections where players take control of another soldier doing something specific. Infinity Ward hired professional script writers to flesh out the plot and dialogue. It aims to be the most story-intensive game *COD* fans have played yet.

Writing this much about *Call of Duty 4* seems moot. If you played and enjoyed the previous games, you will get this regardless. Over the past few months we have met lots of gamers both old and young who can't wait for its release. Clearly the move to a modern combat setting has not dulled any of the love for the series, because very few games put you in the middle of the action and make you know that you are in the thick of it. The only real concern we have is whether the series will ever return to WWII after this. Perhaps not. But perhaps it will expand to even more conflicts. *Call of Duty 4* is about to open a Pandora's Box for war shooters and that is great news.



FRIENDS AND FRAGS

Multiplayer is one of the most anticipated parts of *Call of Duty 4* for good reason. *COD 2* and *3* were and still are incredibly popular on the 360's LIVE service, while the PC versions also enjoyed prolific multiplayer support from series fans. Last month we covered the *COD 4* MP Beta in detail, but here is a small refresher. Vehicles have been retired and the series is back to all-foot action. Material penetration is active and very effective. That is because the heavier the weapon you brandish, the more stuff you can shoot through. To get to those weapons, though, you'll need to play the game. *COD 4's* multiplayer features – from the weapons and enhancements to the various game modes – have to be unlocked by raising your rank. Ranks are improved by getting into the field and fighting other players. You gain points from these kills and completing objectives. Soon enough you have more choice of what to play as well as more weapons with extra enhancements, such as laser sights, on them. This is particularly useful with the Create-a-Class feature. Once you unlock this feature, you can put elements of the various game classes together to form your own soldier.



Q&A: CALL OF DUTY 4

FEATURE: Call of Duty 4

A few months ago Activision brought Grant Collier, Infinity Ward's CEO, to sunny South Africa to give us our first look of *Call of Duty 4*. A lot more has emerged since, but for the real details we sat down with him and tried to gather some intel.

Are movies like *Black Hawk Down* big inspirations for the game?

We have many designers that work at Infinity Ward and for each level they are the director and that's their small movie and they take inspiration from all kinds of things. There isn't any mandated "this will be your inspiration". They have a storyline, they know what the layout is and there are objectives that need to be done, but they can choose to get them done any way they want to. So they are like the directors, the acting coaches are the programmers and the set designers are the artists. And now we have script writers, so they all come together to create the vision for the designer. So different designers will have different inspirations.

In your own words, what would make *COD 4* appealing as a modern combat game to what is already out there?

I think we can also weave in 'am I worried about people not being interested because it's not World War II anymore?'. My answer is the same for both. *COD* has fans not just because it's WWII, but because they like the squad warfare, they like the immersiveness of the gameplay, the dedication to being authentic and the cinematic action. So things can happen in a modern day setting and I think there is actually a big void there. I don't feel that we are going to be taking anything away from those other modern games. I think we're adding to the genre. I feel the WWII fans will love *COD 4* as much as the previous games. I think we're also opening doors for the franchise, because some people just don't like WWII games. There is so much of *COD* that other games don't touch. I really don't know why people don't spend more time trying to emulate what we do.

green hills we'd do the the Americans in Normandy, British in the desert. Now we can go to the locations using a helicopter or a jet carrying the character. So we've really been able to focus a lot more on story. Usually small campaign short stories had you meet the character and then he goes away. Now we've gotten rid of that method and we are just really changing things up. Kinda like an action novel or episode of 24, we're just able to jump around and do a lot of stuff. I think that it will be able to show things in a very different way to *COD 3*.

Do the scriptwriters know what you are doing and have they worked on games before?

The guys that we are working with have not worked on games before. But they are big fans of videogames and have had a lot of ideas of how they would do things in a game. So, no they haven't, but we interviewed several before we chose who we would go with. The guys that we have now are really comfortable with games. They get it, which is important to us.

Have you found that going to a modern era has made things less rigid? Are you taking advantage of the fact that you can make up your own war?

There are a lot of plusses to WWII and there are plusses to modern day. You've got a huge volume of material that you can drop onto the WWII stuff. For modern day you have living, breathing people who experienced things two months and can give you pointers and tell you about their experiences.

Do you have any consultants?

Well, we have our same consultant, Lieutenant Hank Keirse. He started

us about his life experiences. We also had a few other folks we worked with – guys who taught us about door breaching, repelling of ropes and so on. They didn't blow off any of our actual doors, but they talked about using a shotgun with solid rounds to shoot off hinges. We also had guys abseiling off the side of our building, including the animators. We went to Nevada to do big weapon shoots. We had these survivalist guys who know the end of the world is coming. They have every weapon ever known to man. They won't let you photograph them, they want to be totally off the grid. But we went to firing ranges to test all these weapons.

COD 4 is heavy on motion capture. Was that the only method you used?



We have a lot of hardcore animators who are all about hand-animating everything. Everything in *COD 1* and *2* was hand-animating. But with the volume of stuff we wanted to do we had to go to motion capture. So they were like "What about me?" So, those little bits where we can't motion capture, like the view models, were done by hand. During weapons tests we'd have a camera over the animator's shoulder, so they had a reference when animating those parts of the game.

What kind of research went into the game?

We've got a fan of the series called Major Kevin Collins. He recently retired, but at the time he was one of the head honchos at the 29 Palms military base. That base is one of the very few places in the world where tanks can come and do live fire actions. They have these cement LEGO villages. The infantry and tanks will move through and green army men would pop up which they have to knock down. There are lasers on them that will tell you if you've been killed. There are also these big posts with a plank of wood across to identify a truck racing towards you. We would be in the centre building, filming down at these guys. We had people behind them filming as well. So we'd see the tanks form up and how the infantry supported them. They have tank companies from Australia, the UK and all over to use these facilities.

How do you get access to military bases like that?

I think it's a lot easier now that we've done *COD 1* and *2*, because there are so many people in the military who are huge fans. A lot of the soldiers are between 18 and 21 and they play the game at home. So they all just climb all over each other to talk to us and give us the info. Their commanders are also fans, so just the success of the previous titles have opened up a lot of doors. So you just call them up and say you want to do research – and they are very eager to help. **NAG**.

 I really don't know why people don't spend more time trying to emulate what we do. 

How is it working with scriptwriters? Is this the first time you've worked with writers from outside the industry?

Yeah, this is the very first time. We've been much more story focused. Now that we're modern day, we are able to change from location to location with the same characters, where with *COD 1* and *2* we had to go to different nationalities. So if we wanted a winter setting, use the Russians, or for lush

working with us on *COD 1* and *COD 2*. We kinda missed him for about four months, because he was in Iraq training professional contractors – I'm not supposed to say 'mercenaries', but he was out there training mercenaries. He's over sixty years old, but still really bad ass and he's been very excited about the fact that we're doing modern day. So instead of recanting stuff that he would tell his students at West Point, he can tell

DIRECT SEX 10

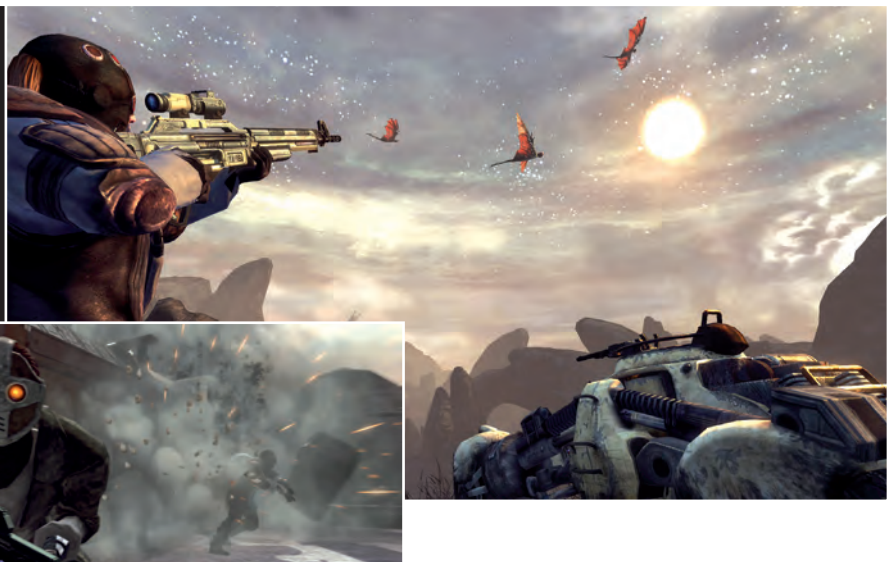
TOO MANY GAMERS GET so caught up in visuals, we may as well just stop calling them games and call them interactive movies instead. DirectX 10 brings with it visual improvement – it gives game programmers more power to work with, since it interfaces with the DirectX 10 graphics cards and their new, advanced features. However, DirectX 10 is not an automatic improvement in visuals – just how DirectX 9 was not an automatic improvement in visuals. Games have to be produced to really take advantage of the newer features, and very few games actually do. This is an affliction of PC gaming since the dawn of time – graphics cards are becoming more powerful faster than programmers and artists can really keep up with.

Crysis, for example, is being hailed as a game that would have been impossible before DirectX 10, which if you ask any proper game programmer, simply isn't true. DirectX 10 facilitated a faster improvement of visuals because of sheer power, not because it's doing something previously impossible. Once games fully utilise the power of DirectX 10, they will be incredible to look at and play – but of course by then, everyone will be looking at DirectX 11 instead and development on DirectX 10 games will stop long before reaching the true potential of the standard. But, games are looking prettier each day – no denying that. Is this because of improved visuals, or improved use of existing technology?

BORDERLANDS

Developer→ Gearbox | **Publisher**→ 2K Games
Platforms→ PC, 360, PS3 | **Genre**→ Action | **Release Date**→ 2008

WHAT DO YOU NEED when you already have guns? Vehicles? That seems to be the thinking behind Gearbox's latest game. The studio that started with the *Blue Shift* expansion/mod for *Half-Life* and porting several franchises from consoles to the PC, has made quite a name for itself, especially with the excellent *Brothers in Arms*. Now it plans to create another original IP called *Borderlands*. Story details are scant, but what you need to know is that it will combine shooters with vehicle action, similar to what the *Unreal Tournament* and *Battlefield* games have done. How it will come together, though, hasn't been revealed, but *Borderlands* will have a single-player campaign with co-op support as well as multiplayer games, which will apparently generate random missions, levels and other stuff to keep things going. Drop in/Drop out gameplay will also be supported, so you can pop into a friend's game, blow up all his stuff and disconnect, letting him suffer the wrath of the enemy! It should be interesting.



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 3: PAYBACK

Developer→ TBA | **Publisher**→ Activision
Platforms→ TBA | **Genre**→ Action | **Release Date**→ TBA

FINALLY, FINALLY, SOMETHING HAS emerged on *Soldier of Fortune 3*, a game that has been appearing on release schedules for a while now. The last we saw it mentioned was on a recent Activision brochure, which listed it as a budget title. While we were assured it's going to be a triple-A game instead and the listing was a mistake, we weren't that positive after seeing the video of gameplay footage released. It looked pretty bland, only involving standard run-and-gun shooter ideas. What's wrong with that? Well, SOF is the series that brought heavy-handed gore to the shooter genre. It was always its claim to fame that enemy bodies could be blown to bits – literally. The average character model had more than ten damage zones that could split apart when sufficient damage was applied. This just bolstered SOF's hardcore credential, since the game's main character is a mercenary and the title is indeed from infamous magazine *Soldier of Fortune*. Then we saw the second trailer, which involved several people being dissected with your machine gun. We take our words back – *Soldier of Fortune 3: Payback* looks terrific!



PROTOTYPE

Developer→ Radical Entertainment | **Publisher**→ Sierra
Platforms→ PC, 360, PS3 | **Genre**→ Action | **Release Date**→ 2008

PROTOTYPE CAN CLIMB OR wall-run across any surface, jump 30 stories high, and destroy anything that crosses his path," said Kelly Zmak, president of Radical Entertainment. Sounds dandy; we were wondering how long it would take before something that sounds and acts like *Crackdown* would arrive. See, *Crackdown* was fun, but it was also very limiting. You weren't really much more than a *GTA* character on steroids. Wall-running, wall

jumps, holding onto a perch while shooting... these are things we expect a super-duper agent to do! *PROTOTYPE* is the story of Alex Mercer, a man fighting an underground war in New York City. It all ties to a bigger conspiracy, but all you need to know is that Mr Mercer can shape-shift into any person he encounters. If you need more, developer Radical is a veteran studio with games like *Scarface* and *Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* behind its name.



SUPER SMASH BROS BRAWL

Developer→ Nintendo | Publisher→ Nintendo | Platforms→ Wii
Genre→ Action | Release Date→ December 2007

IT'S TIME FOR MORE party fighting antics! Those who can play the *Smash Bros* series – in other words, those who do more than frantically punch buttons and try to hop back onto a level – must be rolling over with giddy glee that another game is on its way. But it's to be expected. *Smash Bros Melee* was the best-selling game on the GameCube, so Nintendo simply has to release a new title for the Wii. How those freaky controls will work remains to be seen, but you can expect a large roster of Nintendo characters along with Konami's Solid Snake. Yes, the *MGS* man is making his debut in the series as a cameo character, though we wonder what his special power is. Maybe he makes other characters immobile by sending messages to their pocket communicators. For the fanboys, Samus will also appear without her suit. Stop us if we're wrong, but didn't the suit bind with her originally? Weirdness...



NIGHTS: JOURNEY OF DREAMS

Developer→ SEGA | Publisher→ SEGA | Platforms→ Wii | Genre→ Platform | Release Date→ Q4 2007

NIGHTS! KUDOS IF YOU actually played the original, which was a launch title for the SEGA Saturn. Now, many years later, a sequel is finally arriving, if you don't count the N-Gage version. *NiGHTS* is the story of Will and Helen, two twelve-year-old siblings who have problems in real life. These problems spill over to their dreams, where they meet the weird jester, NiGHTS, and his world of Nightopia. Here the duo will learn how to deal with their problems, somehow by flying around in crazy loops, picking up tokens and defeating enemies. In other words, it's a platformer. But *NiGHTS* is one of the more acclaimed and original platformers ever made, so it's nice to see it return. The Wii's remote should give a new angle to the action as well and we can't think of a better union, especially since Nintendo's console is crying for a few more decent and solid games.



WHAT WE WANT

DIRT AND GRIME

No more tricks, no more fading in a second texturemap that has mud pre-painted on to the car – we're tired of tricks. It's time environments started actually containing the properties of that environment – mud should be able to splash up on to and stick to any object, grime should accumulate in unkept corners automatically and not just be placed there by an artist with a good eye for realism. Environmental properties being transferrable and transmutable (mud can be washed off with water) may sound computationally difficult but in reality, we have more CPU cycles than we know what to do with – developers simply aren't focusing on it.

WEATHER

Snow, rain, fog and other weather effects are always tricks – particles pre-scripted to fall in certain areas, fog is placed in the map editor and snow will never, ever pile up if you just stand there and watch it snow for a few years. We can't wait until weather is an actual interlocking system that not only plays off itself, but takes into account the dirt and grime mentioned earlier: have you seen a racing game where you can get mud on your car but the mud will wash off in the rain? If you have, tell us – we'd love to play it.

COLLISION PERFECTION

Stuff still pokes through walls, fall through floors or get tangled up in a jumping, jiggling mess of polygons trying desperately to find their Euclidian centre – which is so 1990s. It's about time developers started going back trying to make their engine feel as solid as possible instead of trying to make it look as pretty as possible. *Quake* was a good example of a "solid" feel – entities and level geometry made a point of defining their boundaries – then along came *Unreal*, which was damn pretty but it felt like you were walking on air.

LIQUID DYNAMICS

PhysX card aside, water these days sure does look pretty but we know it's just a shader atop a large, flat polygon. There's no ebb, no flow and you certainly can't displace water in any capacity. Some games even take it too far and the water looks like a rippling mirror instead of a body of light-diffusing fluid. Characters can't really get wet – they simply change state from 'Dry' to 'Wet' and the proper particle systems engage to make little drippy particles. It's cute, but it's been done to death.

RADIOSITY

The Source engine does actually have a hack that attempts this idea (radiosity is a lighting algorithm that tries to do proper diffuse lighting, letting objects near each other take on the subtle colour tones being bounced off them due to how light rays bounce around), but it's a proper hack and doesn't handle all situations, which breaks the suspension of disbelief. True radiosity is very attainable with today's powerful GPUs, but seems to be unimportant in the eyes of developers (but the engine producers, such as Valve and Epic, seem to be aiming towards proper lighting solutions).

ALL NAG CONSOLE PREVIEWS AND REVIEWS ARE VISUALISED USING THE SAMSUNG LA46M81B LCD TV

SPECS

■ SIZE

46" (117cm)

■ RESOLUTION

Full HD 1080p (1,920 x 1,080)

■ CONTRAST RATIO

15,000:1 (dynamic)

■ RESPONSE TIME

8ms

■ VIEWING ANGLE (H/V)

178/178

■ POSTPROCESSOR

DNLe

■ INPUTS

HDMI x 3, Composite x 2,

Component x 2, S-video, VGA

www.samsung.co.za

SAMSUNG

SAMSUNG



Jim's labrador-on-steroids is about to kick some ass!

THE EYE OF JUDGEMENT

AS AN AVID TCG/CCG (trading card game/collectible card game) player, it was with great interest that I sat down in front of our office PlayStation 3 and large-screen TV to take a look at this novel videogame. Having set up the mat and camera on the boardroom table – yes, that's where we keep our consoles – it was time to start figuring out the preview version we had been provided with.

First, let's look at what the game consists of. There is, of course, a disk with the actual game software, and the aforementioned mat and camera – the latter with a special stand to allow it to be mounted facing down at the mat. The other component is a deck of cards. With the preview version, we were provided with a set deck, but in the retail release, decks will vary. Booster packs of additional cards will be available for purchase as well. The camera interacts with the cards: barcodes on the cards are read by the camera, and the game then determines the specific card's location and orientation, displaying the corresponding unit or monster on the TV screen.

The game is played on a 3 x 3 grid, and the object of the game is to control at least five of the nine squares. Players alternate taking turns, much as in most board and card games. Before the game, each player shuffles his or her deck, is granted one

'mulligan' opportunity (check the hand and, if dissatisfied, reshuffle and draw a new hand), and then the game begins. Players have a default mana income of two per turn, and this is the resource that's used to summon creatures to the board, play their abilities, turn them, or cast spells. Furthermore, whenever a creature dies, its controller gains back one mana (some creatures net additional mana when they die). Most creatures only attack in the direction they face, though some have more versatile targeting. Most creatures attack when being summoned. Some creatures are fortresses – so don't attack unless attacked – and provide (usually defensive) bonuses to allied units based on various criteria.

The tiles on the playing field are usually element based (Fire, Water, Stone, Forest, or Biolith), and the vast majority of creatures are aligned with one of these elements. Creatures played on a tile matching their element gain a health bonus, while those played on a contrasting element tile suffer a penalty, which might kill them outright. Some creatures may only be played on their element tiles, and are destroyed otherwise.

Those are the basic mechanics. However, how does the game actually play out? Unfortunately, due to the limited selection of cards we had been issued with, it was difficult to assess the depth of the game dynamics. However, at least at first glance,



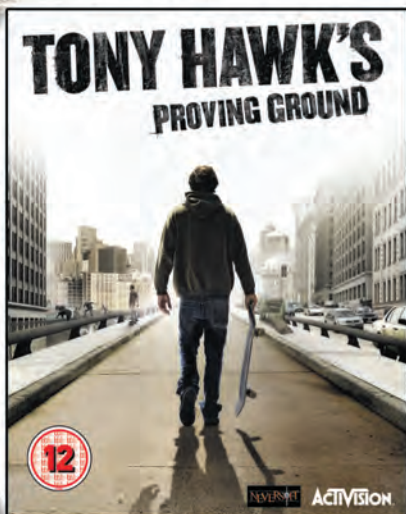
it appears that games can be quite intricate. Deck construction, as in any good TCG/CCG, will play an important role. It remains to be seen, however, how the board layouts will be implemented, as this could be a random element that could pre-decide a game's outcome if improperly implemented. Overall, the concept is innovative and holds potential. The two-dimensional board and the ability for units to face different directions – a fact that influences play – may provide something that few TCGs/CCGs have yet supplied. Take *Magic: The Gathering* for example: the game has no real spatial element to it, though some may argue that it does, albeit a linear (one-dimensional) one. If the card pool for *Eye of Judgement* is deep enough, and if enough forethought has gone into its design for cards to be balanced, this game could usher in a whole new videogaming genre. **NAG**

Alex Jelagin



TONY HAWK'S PROVING GROUND

Every skater has a story.
Create yours.



In Tony Hawk's Proving Ground you choose the skills to learn, the skate style you'll show, and how your story unfolds. Go effortlessly from single player to online multiplayer as you turn the whole world into your own personal skatepark. With the full-feature editor, you can record and edit videos of your greatest, most amazing moves in all their epic glory.



Will you try to invent a new trick or make



Use the full-feature video editor to truly tell your story



Pick the skate moves you want to master to show your own style



CG/2006/0292



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360 LIVE

megarom

www.megarom.co.za

Tel: +27 11 361 4800
sales@megarom.co.za

Wii

ACTIVISION®

©2007 Activision Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision Publishing, Inc. Developed by Neversoft. Tony Hawk is a registered trademark of Tony Hawk, Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. "2", "PlayStation" and "PLAYSTATION" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. NINTENDO and NINTENDO DS ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. All other trademarks and trade names are the properties of their respective owners.

NEVERSOFT

KANE & LYNCH: DEAD MEN



NOTHING IS QUITE AS painful as a great game being let down by the stupidest of things: the control system. Here at NAG, we had high hopes for *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men* – very high hopes. The game exudes a lot of maturity, a nice script, and characters that actually have character. As many observers remarked while we were playing the preview build, “That guy’s bald!” Yes, how many middle-aged bald characters do you see in games? Not that many, we know, and it’s a sad reflection of how games in general still stick to the safe areas that you’d find in mainstream comic books. Even the mature Sam Fisher from *Splinter Cell* still has a certain suave to him, and the last time we can remember a main character sporting a moustache (excluding the geriatric Snake in *MGS 4*) was *Soldier of Fortune*.

However, perhaps we’re being a bit fussy. Certainly, there are a few more examples of non-clichéd characters in games that weren’t inspired by comics of manga. Still, Kane and Lynch have a lot more than that going for them. They look mean, they act mean, and their attitude extends no further than getting the job done. Kane is in a difficult situation. His military buddies break him out of jail, only to tell him that they’re going to kill him no matter what he does, and unless he gets them the cash they say he had stolen from them before going to jail, they’ll kill his wife and daughter as well. To make sure he doesn’t screw up, they enlist the help of fellow escapee, Lynch, a bearded psychopath who chews on prescription medicine. He’ll phone in every day to report their progress or else Kane’s family gets it. This makes for a real odd couple, since Kane is a professional mercenary and Lynch is a trigger-happy lunatic. Between them, they’ll take on even meaner people, specifically a Japanese syndicate, the mercenaries, lots of cops, and anyone who comes in between.

Everything around the game appears to take all this grit and run with it. In the preview build we could play through several different levels: from the duo’s escape from custody to robbing a bank; from kidnapping someone from a club to infiltrating a skyscraper and continuing the fight on the street afterwards. The design and colours are all bleak and stark, complementing the edgy nature of the game very nicely. Likewise, the dialogue is superb in its rough and banal approach. The characters swear, words aren’t being minced, and it’s actually fun

listening to Kane and Lynch’s conversations – often dripping with animosity. Kane despises the fact that Lynch is not only his babysitter, but is also nearly useless as far as mercenary experience is concerned. Finally, it’s all brought together with cinematic flair. The use of the camera, the interesting in-game cut-scenes and the graphics (which aren’t mind-blowing but very solid nonetheless) all bring the game together as a solid experience (provided you’re watching and not playing).

Yes, *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men* falls apart completely once you actually try to play the game. For reasons only IO’s possibly insular development team could explain, the controls are hell on toast with some more hell spread on for taste. Where to start? Well, the cover system is rubbish – full stop. You have no control over it and the characters decide when and where they attach and detach. That’s a problem when you are trying to avoid a dozen cops shooting at you. One moment you’re leaning out from behind cover and shooting, the next you’re standing next to your cover and accepting the bullet barrage coming your way. Thanks to this, the rest just falls apart. Hitting targets is tricky and frustrating. Giving team orders is pointless, since you spend most of the time trying to cover your own ass. On top of that, your team members die easily, forcing you to restart the level. Worst of all, shooting from behind cover is never clear. If you’re against a low surface, say a window or a counter, instead of your character shooting over it, bullets tend to slam into your cover.

The nail in *Kane & Lynch*’s coffin is that we couldn’t interest anyone in playing it. They would watch, comment on the bald guy, and then relish in your screams of anguish after you die for the umpteenth time in the same section. Okay, so maybe we suck, but most people do and most people thus won’t buy this game. *Gears of War* gave developers a good idea of how a cover system should work. Hell, *Rogue Trooper* had a good system. There’s no excuse for this other than that IO staff members probably have no social life and blow all their time playing games that frustrate the hell out of you. There’s no way to hide NAG’s disappointment: *Kane & Lynch: Dead Men* could have been exceptional, but now it appears to be unplayable. Such a pity! **NAG**

James Francis





"THE most stunning RTS engine we've seen to date"

PCZONE

"One of the most beautiful visions of warfare you're likely to see."

PCFormat

WORLD IN CONFLICT™



Superpowered Warfare | Exciting Single Player Campaign | Drop-in Multiplayer | Fast-paced Teamplay
Command your troops into battles fought on fully destructible real-life environments. Strategy meets intense action in this clash of Super Powers on American soil. www.worldinconflict.com



© 2007 Massive Entertainment AB. All rights reserved. World in Conflict, Massive Entertainment and the Massive Entertainment logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Massive Entertainment AB in the U.S. and/or other countries. Sierra and the Sierra logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. The NVIDIA logo, GeForce and "The Way It's Meant To Be Played" logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation in the United States or other countries.



Winner Best Strategy Game





Inter-species staring contest



LOST ODYSSEY

YOU ARE KAIM, IMMORTAL, your wretched existence tugged over a thousand undying years of political tumult and mercenary warfare, while memory of it all eludes your grasp. The world around you writhes and groans on the threshold of some occult industrial revolution; the three kingdoms laying careless waste to the lands with petty struggles, while their people turn to an unpredictable darkness for power. You must tread this broken, uncertain landscape in search of the mystery that is you, and unravel the tangled web of your strange destiny. Yes, it does sort of sound like *Planescape: Torment*, but, um, this one isn't AD&D and it uses the Unreal Engine 3.

The team behind the game is a rockstar list of who's who in Japanese entertainment. Acclaimed novelist, Kiyoshi Shigematsu, has penned the original story, working closely with *Final Fantasy* creator, Hironobu Sakaguchi, while award-winning manga artist, Takehiko Inoue (*Slam Dunk*, *Buzzer Beater*, *Vagabond*, *Real*), heads up the art department and Nobuo Uematsu (*Final Fantasy*, *Chrono Trigger*, *Blue Dragon*) is on musical duty. Shigematsu, confident in his storytelling finesse and the emotional

potency of his newest creation, has assured gamers that they will cry when they play it. "We don't see enough emotion in videogames," Sakaguchi elaborated. "Something that bring tears to your eyes. I want these emotional elements. The main character, who has been living for a thousand years and can't die – he has a thousand years of memories, and that creates a lot of emotional moments." The game is so immense, moreover, that the release will span four – four! – DVDs. Best buy those snotrags in bulk. Clocking in at some 40 to 50 hours of game time, *Lost Odyssey* also features thirty-four "1,000-year dream sequences", which is mystical for "10-minute cut scenes with reams of text".

In terms of combat, *Lost Odyssey*'s sword-slapping is very much the same sort of thing seen in turn-based RPGs like the last few *Final Fantasy* titles. Once you've committed yourself to a squabble, your options are Attack, Magic, Items, or Block. Once you've selected your dauntless combatant (Kaim will acquire a motley gaggle of hangers-on during the course of his adventures, including an immortal ladyfriend named Seth), your choice of action will necessarily depend on

that character's skills and abilities. Kaim, for example, is a dapper hand at deflecting frontside lunges, but tends to leave his hapless spinal column exposed to those craven stabs in the back. Of course, since he can't actually die, any otherwise mortal blow will simply send him reeling to the dust, there to lie in unconscious stupor until his pals have punished their enemies for such wilful insolence.

There's also shiny treasure to collect, including more than 150 combat rings. These baubles offer the happy bearer a range of power levels and elemental affinities for combat clout. If, for example, your character is brandishing a fire-enhanced weapon, you can double-up with a fire combat ring to really bring the hurt. **NAG**

Tarryn van der Byl





TOP TITLES



Contact any of our stores to speak to expert staff about any queries! or go to www.topcd.co.za

Top CD Menlyn: Shop LF57 & 58, Parking level 5A, Menlynpark Shopping Centre, cnr of Atterbury & Lois Ave. Pretoria (012) 361 6247.
 Top CD Kolonade: Shop L70A, Lower level, Kolonade Shopping Centre, Zambesi Drive, Montana, Pretoria. (012) 548 5146.
 Top CD Centurion: Shop 270 Entrance 5, Centurion Shopping Centre, Heuwel Avenue, Centurion. (012) 663 7468.
 Top CD Cresta: Shop U44, Game entrance, Cresta Shopping Centre, Beyers Naude Drive, Randburg. (011) 476 7414.
 Top CD Sunnypark: Shop 7, Lower level, Sunny Park Centre, Cnr Esselen and Jeppe Street, Sunnyside. (012) 341 0233.



www.ea.co.za

SOUL CALIBUR LEGENDS

MAKING A RIGHT-TURN DEPARTURE from the norm rather suddenly (and then backing up over the norm a few times to make sure it's dead), *Soul Calibur Legends* will be an adventure game spin-off based on the *Soul Calibur* franchise but without the whole pesky "Fighting Game" thing. There is fighting, but it's more like a brawler now. The Wiimote and Nunchuk are used to orchestrate combos and special attacks as you adventure through the environment, killing hundreds of enemies and defeating large bosses by waggling the Wiimote and Nunchuk around in specific ways – the Wii way.

Legends follows Siegfried and other *Soul Calibur* characters as they try to save the empire from destruction. You'll be able to switch between characters on the fly, using their strengths and weaknesses mid-battle. Characters will level-up as you play them and the weapons will also evolve with experience, unlocking new attacks. Multiplayer allows for cooperative modes and versus modes, but no announcement has been made yet as to whether or not two players will be able to play

the campaign together. There is no online mode planned and from the looks of it, don't expect one.

It certainly looks interesting and is sure to appeal to those who love the *Soul Calibur* universe but are either tired of the Fighting Games or wouldn't mind a more mindless break from the intensity of pure versus fighting. With *Soul Calibur 4* handling the Fighting Game side well enough, there's no reason *Legends* can't become a decent spin-off addition to the franchise with its own sequels.

But, as with most spin-offs, it can be very hit-or-miss. It's all very reliant on the control scheme and the quality of the action when it comes to brawlers, and that's something no screenshot or video is going to accurately represent. The rest is up to the fans and how much they're willing to put up with – something the *Soul Calibur* brand has yet to discover.

NAG

Miktar "Lizardman, duh" Dracon





BEAUTIFUL DEATH

NOVEMBER 2007

ASSASSIN'S CREED™



WWW.ASSASSINSCREED.COM



CG/2007/0179



PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360

megarom

www.megarom.co.za

Tel: +27 11 361 4800
sales@megarom.co.za



UBISOFT™

Assassin's Creed © 2007 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Assassin's Creed, Ubisoft, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. Published and developed by Ubisoft Entertainment. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. "2", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS3" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



Hardcore stage diving

LEFT 4 DEAD

OKAY, HERE'S A TONGUE twister for you: the upcoming survival horror multiplayer co-op game, *Left 4 Dead*, is expected to be released early in 2008. It will feature many aspects similar to those of *Counter-Strike* and *Counter-Strike: Source*, but instead of terrorists and anti-terrorists, it will be survivors against the infected (zombies!). The game focuses on four survivors and their plight to escape from various zones while other infected humans try to kill them. These infected humans all suffer from a horribly mutated form of rabies, which comes in five different flavours: the Tank, the Boomer, the Smoker, the Hunter, and the Witch. While not much is known about their individual abilities, their names make it quite obvious what their purposes are.

What really seems to set this game apart from the likes of *Counter-Strike* is the new AI system, which has been dubbed "The Director." Apparently, this system will ensure no repeated enemy re-spawns in the same

location, and will monitor and keep the pace of the game flowing against bots. This means that there will never be a dull moment when a player cannot find an enemy, but there will be some nervous calm silences before the storm, so to speak.

As for weapons, *Left 4 Dead* doesn't differ much from the usual load-out. Players will be able to use sniper and regular rifles, Uzis, handguns, shotguns, and homemade bombs. The infected don't really have weapons to speak of, unless you include projectile vomiting, but will rather focus on slashing and goring with their hands. It might make them easy to kill, but in great numbers, this can easily change the tide of battle.

Left 4 Dead will also feature an awards system, which will ensure that players cannot just shoot at anything that moves - killing friends will be penalised and will affect a player's rewards. **NAG**

Justin Slabbert



MASTER TIME TO
BECOME THE ULTIMATE WEAPON



TIMESHIFT

SLOW, STOP, AND REVERSE TIME.

COMING 2ND NOVEMBER



COMING SOON TO
PLAYSTATION 3



© 2007 Sierra Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Designed and developed by Saber Interactive. TimeShift, Sierra and the Sierra logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of Sierra Entertainment, Inc., in the U.S. and/or other countries. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", and the "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.



What some people go through
to get milk in the morning

MERCENARIES 2: WORLD IN FLAMES

THE SEQUEL TO 2005'S *Playground of Destruction*, *Mercenaries 2: World in Flames* is set in a war-torn Venezuela where the player takes on a contract from infamous drug lord, Ramon Solano, to free one of his incarcerated generals. By doing this, you inadvertently become responsible for a military coup, which turns the South American country into chaos. As the new dictator, Solano is messing with Venezuela's oil supply and an invasion follows, making it the perfect setting for mercenaries to make some money and have some fun. Solano is also refusing to pay for the job you successfully completed, and a shootout occurs where a bullet meets your butt. Of course, you're not going to let him get away with this and your new mission is one of revenge.

However, there's no rush. In an expansive environment, which Pandemic Studios claims is bigger than all the maps of the original title put together, there's a lot to see, do and blow up in this title. Everything in the game is interactive; a nice feature powered by the Havok 4.5 Physics Engine. This means that you can destroy every part

of the beautifully designed landscapes (from the buildings in the densely-populated capital city of Caracas to the rolling jungles of the Amazon rain forest) for no particular reason, except maybe the thrill of it. Whether the destruction is realistic or has the pre-planned animation feel to it remains to be seen, but we are hoping for the former. Flammable objects, such as oil spillages, plants, buildings and people can be set alight any time with a quick flip of your handy Zippo lighter. In addition, any vehicle you find, from sports cars to tanks, boats, helicopters and planes, can be blown up, set alight, bought or stolen.

While hijacking a vehicle is simply a matter of completing a mini game, which varies in difficulty according to the type of vehicle, stealing someone else's property will have certain ramifications. There are five factions occupying Venezuelan territory: the People's Liberation Army of Venezuela (the group you are ultimately backing), allied nations, the Chinese, Rastafarian pirates, and Universal Petroleum. Initially, each group is happy to give you information or resources (including money) in exchange



for the completion of certain missions, but relations will be adjusted according to whom you choose to help. Stealing or blowing up a certain groups' property or equipment can sour future dealings with them, though playing factions off against each other could be to your benefit.

A cooperative multiplayer option allows a friend to drop in at any time during the game to help (or hinder) your progression through the main campaign. Moreover, with several ways to approach or complete each task or mission, adding another person to the mix could give the game a great deal of replay value. You also have the ability to recruit other mercenaries you come across during the game to create your own personal military support.

With the advanced AI system promising enemies that use tactics as well as cover during battles and a huge number of highly-advanced and powerful futurist weapons available in the game, *Mercenaries 2: World in Flames* has the potential to be a good title (especially if you like to blow things up). **NAG**

Megan Hughes



Your PC is a Monster.
Give it a **Good Home.**



Introducing the Antec P190 +1200 performance case. This beast can handle anything, in fact, TWO of anything: two video cards, two processors on an Extended ATX motherboard, two RAID arrays, and all the other components that you absolutely must have. Cable management has been artfully engineered to make sure there's room. Remember, you're building a monster; you're going to want it to be comfortable. Filters on all the air intakes will keep it healthy. The 200mm, 140mm x 2 on top, and 120mm fans on the back and lower chamber will keep it cool. The massive NeoLink 1200 Watt power system ensures it has all the power it needs. Put it all together and it means one thing—your monster will be happy. And you don't want your monster unhappy, do you?

Find out more at <http://www.antec.com>.

Antec
The Power of You



FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

JHB +27-11-466-0039

• CT +27-21-551-4411

• www.frontosa.co.za

And you thought plumbing only involved stuffed pipes



SUPER MARIO GALAXY

THE HALLMARK OF A proper first-party *Mario* game (ignoring anything ever developed for the horrible catastrophe that was the Virtual Boy) has always been a combination of surrealism and childlike imagination. There is nothing to say about *Super Mario Galaxy* over and above what you can already deduce for yourself from its vibrant, colourful screenshots – it's a *Mario* game for the Wii that's going to be a complete joy to play, if your superego can handle playing something that looks so 'cute'.

The hook to *Galaxy* is how the platforming gameplay now revolves around vast chains of miniature planetoids, each exerting their own gravitational forces that keep Mario glued to their surface (or orbiting around them). Some planetoids are large enough to contain a more traditional level, while some sections have you spend most of your time in perpetual freefall.

There will be six themed areas, 40 galaxies divided across the themes and 120 stars to collect if you're 'klepto'. Instead of bottomless pits, black holes populate certain areas and represent death for our plumber. There are new moves such as the charged back flip and new 'suits' to complement the established suits from *Super Mario Bros 3*, such as the Boo suit and Bee suit, which turn you into a ghost or a bee, respectively.

The long jump, missing from *Super Mario Sunshine*, makes a welcome return and

overall, *Galaxy* looks to soothe the ruffled feathers left by *Sunshine* – some purists consider *Sunshine* a credibly 'inferior' *Mario* game, whatever that means. Regardless, *Galaxy* looks exactly like a game any self-respecting *Mario* fan could want, regardless of age. Being clever, interesting and filled with plenty of twists in level design as well as imaginative scenarios, will make *Galaxy* a sure-fire hit. One level involves Mario running along a large sheet of freshly-pressed cookies as giant machinery cuts shapes out of the level in real time.

Nintendo has a penchant for knowing how to treat its fans right, which is why the Nintendo brand and iconic Italian mascot continue to be so prominent on the market.

There is mild cooperative play planned for *Sunshine*, which involves one player controlling Mario's movements and attacks, while another uses the Wiimote to aim at the screen, collecting stars and aiding Mario in a variety of ways. How this will pan out remains to be seen.

Any doubt about the visual prowess of the Nintendo Wii is assailed by what *Galaxy* has on show in the graphics department – bump mapping, soft shadows, smooth rounded objects... everything a gamer fixated on technicalities could want. And for everyone else, there's Bowser. **NAG**

Miktar "Bowser, duh" Dracon





THE ROAD IS YOUR CANVAS.



HIGH SPEED ARTISTRY – IT'S HOW RACES ARE WON. POWERSLIDES. DRIFTS. FEARLESS OVERTAKING. BOOST YOUR KUDOS AND GET THE CROWD ON THEIR FEET WITH EVERY HIGH-SPEED PRECISION MANOEUVRE. EACH ONE YOU MAKE LEAVES A MARK. NOT JUST ON THE TRACK, BUT ALSO ON THE OTHER DRIVERS' FRAGILE LITTLE EGOS. XBOX.COM/PGR4

PGR4
PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

Microsoft
game studios



© 2007 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft, the Microsoft Game Studios logo, PGR, Project Gotham Racing, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox LIVE logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies.

Jump in.

 **XBOX 360**



COMMAND & CONQUER 3: KANE'S WRATH

AROUND MARCH OR APRIL next year, a year after the release of *Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars*, Electronic Arts will be releasing an expansion pack for the game. The timing of the release and its content will follow the long-standing *Command & Conquer* tradition: an expansion pack a year after the core game's release, providing additional sub-factions. Some scant details have begun trickling from Electronic Arts regarding what will be in the *Kane's Wrath* expansion. EA spokespeople state that the new material has largely been developed with players' and fans' feedback in mind. This is in keeping with EA's overall policy regarding *C&C3*, which is to support and maintain the game in an effort to turn it into a first-rate competitive game.

Kane's Wrath's timeline stretches from just after the end of the Second Tiberium War (which was depicted in *Tiberian Sun*) to around three years after the end of the Third Tiberium War (the events of *Command & Conquer 3*). Consequently, some of the new units bridge the gap between the units of *Tiberian Sun* and those of *Tiberium Wars*. The GDI gets some hover units again, while the Brotherhood of Nod once again has cyborgs. Let's take a look at some of the units that have been revealed so far.

The Zone Troopers will be bolstered by the new Zone Raiders, which are much like the Troopers, except for their weapon: they carry a rocket launcher instead of a railgun, providing anti-air support. In the air, GDI gets its own aircraft that don't require a landing pad and constant rearming trips. The Hammerhead Gunship packs an anti-infantry machine gun, and can garrison an infantry unit,

much like an APC, which can shoot from inside.

Two hover-tanks are being added: the Slingshot anti-air unit (which carries a sort of quad-cannon) and the Shatterer, which is a Sonic Emitter mounted on a hover platform and devastating against buildings.

Cyborgs make a return in the form of The Awakened. They pack a heavy machine gun on the left arm, which gains the Laser Capacitors upgrades, and an EMP cannon on the right. Their primary function is to trump Zone Troopers and other heavy infantry. Shadow Strike Teams now have the ability to deploy artillery-targeting beacons. These are cloaked, and work in conjunction with the new Specter artillery unit, which itself is cloaked. Specters will be able to target these beacons from anywhere on the map.

The Reckoner armoured personnel carrier is Nod's new transport. It carries up to two infantry units, and can deploy into a bunker when it reaches its destination. While travelling, its occupants cannot shoot, but they can once the Reckoner is in bunker mode. The change is irreversible, and also provides a third garrisoning slot.

Too bad that Scrin units have not been unveiled yet. What we've seen so far, however, has us fairly excited. The *Zero Hour* expansion pack for *Command & Conquer: Generals* defined the game. It's quite possible that the two sub-factions per side in *Kane's Wrath* will do likewise for *Tiberium Wars*. **NAG**

Kane chic:
Wax your dome

Alex Jelagin



RR4



Includes:

- Xbox Pro Console
- 2 x Controllers
- Xbox Game: PGR4



R3999⁰⁰
(Exclusive to Xbox)

Look & Listen
For the Fans

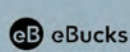
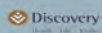
- NAG's preferred gaming retailer.

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

GAUTENG - Fourways: 011 467 1115 • Cresta: 011 476 4142 • Hyde Park: 011 325 4237 • East Rand: 011 823 3642 • Irene: **Now Open**
 Clearwater: 011 675 3648 • Lenasia: 011 852 3231 • Atterbury: 012 991 6626 • Menlyn: 012 368 1080 • Greenstone: 011 524 0049
 Soweto (Maponya Mall): 011 938 4091 **Now Open** • LIMPOPO - Tzaneen: 015 307 4371 **Now Open** • DURBAN - Pavilion: 031 265 1600
NORTH WEST - Rustenburg: 014 537 3466 • MPUMALANGA - Nelspruit: 013 752 4524 • Witbank: 013 692 4530 **Now Open**
FREE STATE - Bloemfontein: 051 430 0313 **Now Open** • WESTERN CAPE - Cavendish: 021 683 1810 • Century City: 021 551 4647
 Willowbridge: 021 914 0760 • Worcester: 023 342 1502

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za. Open 'til 10.30pm, 7 days a week.

While stocks last. E&OE. Prices and availability subject to change at the discretion of the supplier.





DEAD HEAD FRED

Developer→ Vicious Cycle Software | Publisher→ D3 Publishing | Genre→ Action/Adventure | Release→ TBA

PRIVATE EYE, FRED NEUMAN, is having a really bad day. After being brutally decapitated and left to rot in a toxic sludge pond by the last mob boss he was investigating, Ulysses Pitt (who collects heads), Fred has now been resurrected. Instead of leaving poor Fred to a peaceful afterlife, insane scientist, Dr Steiner, has brought him back to life. With a brain and eyeballs floating in jar of liquid where his head once was, Fred is off on a darkly humorous mission to recover his stolen bodily parts and his memory. A little revenge on the side won't do him any harm either.

However, being a recently resurrected headless zombie does have its benefits in a 1940 American-style town overrun with toxic

waste mutants and organised crime gangs. Fred can collect the severed heads of his opponents and switch between them using their unique abilities to complete puzzles and defeat enemies. Special mini games and side missions, which promise gamers more replay value, can earn headless Fred extra cash to spend on upgrading his powers (and heads) or on more jars to carry more heads in. Fred has also been endowed with some interesting attack moves, such as the head-pound and nut-punch, to use during combat. The more Dead Head Fred engages in fighting, the more his Rage bar fills up. A full Rage bar allows Fred to perform powered attacks, which include firing teeth and shooting poison or

even just using his bare hands – especially useful in severing enemies' heads.

Dead Head Fred comes packed with a fairly long campaign as well as a tutorial and 'head hints' to get you started. The game offers open-ended gameplay in which a puzzle can be solved in several different ways. Fred's witty dialogue is performed by *Scrubs*' John McGinley, but profanity is abundant, making it inappropriate in most public spaces you might plan to enjoy the game. The beautiful graphics also ensure longer loading times, which could be quite frustrating, as could the repetitive nature of the combat scenes. **NAG**

Megan Hughes



DARK SECTOR

Developer→ Digital Extremes | Publisher→ D3 Publisher | Genre→ Action | Release→ Q1 2008

THE NEW SCOOP ON the game finally gives us some detail of the storyline and main character. Hayden Tenno is a cleanup man for the CIA, which, of course, is short talk for all around badass. He is also void of all feelings of pain thanks to a rare disease he suffers from called congenital analgia. This disease is actually a blessing in disguise for Hayden: others who are infected by a strange compound go insane from the pain it causes them. This compound starts to mutate Hayden to the degree that he is able to grow a glaive (a three-bladed weapon) from his arm and use it to some absolutely devastating effects. He is also able to conjure light from this ability. The glaive will be fully useable at all times. Not only will the player be able to throw it, but he or she will also be able to guide its trajectory with the use

of a very cool-looking control setup.

The game will be running on a very heavily modified version of the Unreal Engine 2.5, which has been labelled the Evolution Engine. This engine was also used in *Pariah* and *Warpath*.

The in-game graphics, judging from recent video clips, is absolutely stunning. The developers have promised that these clips had not been pre-rendered and are what the game actually looks like. If this is true, then the game might just be one hell of a tasty graphical treat for all.

Dark Sector certainly looks good, and while only due for release early in 2008, it will be worth the wait. The game will be launched on the Xbox 360 and PS3. So, time to throw out those night-lights and get ready for the dark. **NAG**

Justin Slabbert





SAM & MAX: ICE STATION SANTA

Developer→ Telltale Games | Publisher→ Telltale Games | Genre→ Adventure | Release→ 9 November 07

THE FREELANCE POLICE HAVE faced some heavy-duty criminals in *Season 1*: child stars, the President of the United States, the head of the most famous President of the United States, crazed hypnotists and television producers. However, will any of those help them to be ready for the ultimate foe of them all? Of course not. Sam and Max never needed anyone's help, though villains should really swap notes on how they can stop the suited dog and his psychotic rabbit partner. The latest bad guy, though, is no other than Santa

Claus, the ancient and immortal bearded man who lives at the North Pole and delivers gifts to kids. Well, he used to, but now his presents are attacking people and gunfire lights up the night, not Christmas carols. As such, it's the duty of the duo to head north, way north, to get to the bottom of this problem.

Thus starts the first episode of *Season 2*, following the success of the first season. As usual, the games will be available online and you can expect a new one every month. What will be really interesting is to see how Telltale

has adapted and changed the series after the feedback it got and experience it has gained. There will still be shortcomings, such as the oft-voiced complaint that the episodes are too short. Well, that's the price you pay for going episodic, though maybe there will be more focus on tying the various parts together if you play them back to back. However, all that is just waffling for the word count's sake. Sam and Max are back, again, and we'll be first in line to get hold of the new episode. **NAG**

James Francis

ECS ELITEGROUP
Simply Smart

POWER UNLEASHED!

ECS motherboards take your system to the next level of performance by providing maximum force in FSB 1333.

G31T-M



G31 + ICH7 The most popular Motherboard with Intel® 3 series chipsets

- Intel® Core™2 Quad / Core™2 Duo CPUs
- Supports up to FSB 1333 MHz
- Dual DDR2 800 Memory up to 4GB
- Integrated Intel® GMA 3100 Graphics
- 1 PCIe x16 Slot (@X16)
- SATAII 3Gb/s
- Built in 10/100 LAN
- Integrated High Definition Audio

P35T-A



P35 + ICH9DH Gamer's Perfect Match

- Intel® Core™2 Extreme Quad-Core Processors
- Supporting up to FSB 1333 MHz
- Features Ultra I/O Rear Panel
- 2 PCIe x16 Slots (1@X16, 1@X4)
- Dual DDR2 800 Memory up to 8GB
- SATAII 3Gb/s, PATA
- Supports ATI® CrossFire® Technology
- Built in Giga LAN
- Integrated 8-channel High Definition Audio



N7

TO SPACE AND BEYOND

MASS EFFECT

What is your idea of the best space adventure? *Star Trek* without the Prime Directive? Han Solo without all the Rebel and Empire crap? *Babylon 5* without "O Gods, we're gonna die!"? *Battlestar Galactica* without nomad tag-alongs and confused sexbots? *Firefly* with a starship? *Farscape* with some actual fire power? All of the above? Of course! Space travel is about kicking ass and taking names on very foreign terra-firma. If you ask some people, fantasy role-playing games are only so popular because it's a bit harder to come up with original alien stuff without looking stupid. *Knights of the Old Republic*, though, gave us a taste of that world – a vast galaxy of weird creatures and dodgy bars.

Thus we come to *Mass Effect*, Bioware's latest RPG ground-breaker. Usually labeling a game as groundbreaking before it has even been released would reek of a press release's influence. But Bioware can easily claim the accolade. Going through its game list is like reading a must-play list of RPGs: *Baldur's Gate*, *Neverwinter Nights*, *Jade Empire*, *KOTOR*. Perhaps not *Jade Empire*, mainly because most gamers in South Africa and other no-Xbox areas didn't play it. But even with one down it is clear that Bioware likes to innovate in the genre. Before *Baldur's Gate* the choices in RPG were either pedantic, stat-heavy dungeon crawlers or something that plays and barks like *Final Fantasy*.

Mass Effect looms – its new ideas and plans seem set to take the gaming world by storm later this month. The main idea is that you have a galaxy open in front of you – as resistant of you exploring it as you are eager to take a look around. It is a hostile place, this Milky Way, filled with things that have spent a long time perfecting their hostility. It is also a big place, filled with plenty of different species with different opinions about the state of things. Think relationships are hard? Try intergalactic diplomacy. The last thing anyone needs is half the known universe turned against them.



The pained expression on your face shows the disdain for that word in a game. Diplomacy? That sounds dull. Besides, the average gamer's idea of space diplomacy sits somewhere between Borg Klingons and carpet bombing. But *Mass Effect* is Diplomacy with a 'd' for 'dirty'. The game has been described as Jack Bauer in space – the lead protagonist from TV series 24 who shoots, kicks, interrogates and kills his way to the bad guys. As Commander Shepard, your job is simple – intergalactic peace. Shepard is the first human recruit in Spectre, an above-the-law organisation tasked with the job of keeping the galaxy safe and peaceful. He has at his disposal Spectre's resources, his own ship, an all-terrain vehicle called Mako and a team of combatants and other professionals to take with him. But as mentioned, since *Mass Effect* entertains all kinds of aliens and ideologies, that kind of peace will be hard to keep. Basically, everyone is out for their own and if they think that you might not be in tune with their ambitions, we're going to have a problem. Thus the diplomacy – it's a mere matter of whose toes you decide to step on. But sometimes it can't be avoided and digits will be squashed. Usually it would simply involve a choice between the lesser of two evils. In one scene, Shepard has to decide between dealing a vital blow to the main bad guy, Saren, or saving the race of Shepard's alien ally, Urdnot, who needs a cure for a disease killing his people. But the same cure could let Saren create a nearly-invincible army. Thus to head intergalactic peace, you need to do some equally heavy deciding.



BIOWARE'S RESUME

SHATTERED STEEL (1996)

The first of only two non-RPG games Bioware has developed, *Shattered Steel* put players in a large robot and contracted them to blow up mercenaries and other bad guys from rival employers.

BALDUR'S GATE (1998)

While RPG existed before this, *Baldur's Gate* turned the genre on its head with lush graphics, a proper handling of *Dungeons & Dragons* core rules, not to mention a revolutionary combat system.

BALDUR'S GATE II (2000)

If it ain't broke... *Baldur's Gate II* didn't make the leaps and bounds the first game did, but it didn't need to. Instead, more attention was given to better graphics, tightening the character creation and controls, as well as a deeper story.

MDK 2 (2000)

Bioware's second non-RPG, the saga to fight aliens trying to mine the world continues. This time the dog and professor were also playable, but the meat remained with Kurt, the suited man with the kick-ass weapons. One of gaming's ultimate action classics. Sadly another sequel never surfaced.

NEVERWINTER NIGHTS (2002)

It only took two years for the 'sequel' to *Baldur's Gate* to appear, but it felt like much longer. *NWN* took the genre into 3D territory while still maintaining the control system that *Baldur's Gate* revolutionised. It was also a big step forward for user-created mods in Bioware's games.

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC (2003)

Bioware took a break from developing *Dungeons & Dragons* license games, instead giving attention to *Star Wars*. George Lucas's epic hadn't had an RPG yet and Bioware did a sterling job. *KOTOR* looked great, played well and pushed the genre on consoles. It's also the first RPG that Bioware developed for a console.

JADE EMPIRE (2005)

Based in medieval China, *Jade Empire* allowed Bioware to play with a few new ideas. Also developed for a console, the game had a real-time combat system and only allowed direct control over the main character. It was received with mixed feelings, but unfortunately the game was never officially released locally.





TALK OF THE TOWN

The dialogue in *Mass Effect* is handled in a very simple way that gets around a problem always present in most games where you have to banter with non-player characters (NPCs). Usually conversations aren't fluid as you have to wait for a character to stop talking before you can voice your opinion. In *Mass Effect*, the conversation options appear while the character is still talking, allowing players to make their selection ahead of time. This creates a much more natural conversation, though it is still possible to not make a choice and watch as the characters stand there in silence, waiting for their lines. To bolster these more natural chat sessions, the character models are incredible to say the least. Everything you'll talk to – whether its alien or human – will have a large range of facial expressions to show mood and interest. These will become important to read as many of your responses will be emotional instead of rational and can affect the situation in a positive or negative way. In other words, you're going to have to read the body language of NPCs and choose your words wisely.

All this would be useless, though, if the characters didn't look like they were saying the lines. *Mass Effect* contains over 30,000 lines of spoken dialogue and will be released in more than five languages. Usually that would mean some really dodgy lip animation, but Bioware developed its own technology that interprets the spoken words and moves character lips accordingly. Similar to what Valve's Source engine has demonstrated, *Mass Effect* will transfer lines regardless of the language and make it look natural on your alien chum's face.



MASS. MASSER, MASSIVE

The name *Mass Effect* refers to a new physics phenomenon in the game. Not long from now, humans discover old alien hardware on Mars, allowing us monkeys to suddenly travel vast distances in space once we figure out the technology and spook a lot of alien races with our monkeyness. 'Mass Effect' is apparently what today's scientists call dark matter and gives an entirely different explanation for gravity and how the universe expands. It also allows ships to be sent over very long distances, cutting down on some of the centuries-long downtime you'd normally feel when going to Alpha Centauri or another local tourist spot. In the game this appears to involve large jump gates that look sciency and magicky. It's all very factual.



Sometimes it will require somewhat heavier munitions than negotiations and tough choices. Shepard will be able to take along a team of crew members to fight Spectre's battles with. *Mass Effect* has an interesting combination of real-time action, complete with both a cover system and simple 'go there' squad commands, as well as something called the Wheel of Power. When this is brought up, the game pauses and a player will be able to give all the characters tactical commands. For example, if someone has the ability to jam annoying and lethal gun turrets during a fight, they can be directed to do their magic. Meanwhile, another character can be told to give cover fire and so on. Once the wheel disappears from view, the action continues in real time. Imagine a much more advanced version of *Baldur's Gate* letting you pause and direct the action while fighting – a quirky but very engaging turn-base/real-time hybrid. There will be times when losing a fight won't mean you lost the game, but it will change something in the game. Choices are everything in *Mass Effect*.

Sometimes you'll have the choice to get around a battle. Characters have the ability to charm and intimidate (and like all abilities this can be leveled up for more effectiveness). When the choice comes, a character can try to get out of a situation by applying some friendly words or harsher suggestions. This is not really anything new when it comes to role-playing games, but what certainly makes it seem new is the conversation system and the incredible animations. There will probably be a lot to nitpick when you study the animations closely, but few will be foolhardy enough to deny that they are stunning. Asking how many polygons there are in a character's face seems moot – it will be a large number, because the characters – even the alien ones – are highly expressive. This has been part of Bioware's mission: to create a game where players can sense the emotions of characters and feel emotions as a result. This is bolstered by some exceptional lip-syncing. It works well, but a large part of that is due to the conversation system. Traditionally, when an NPC blathers on in an RPG, we have to patiently wait for them to finish. *Mass Effect* presents a subtle but smart change – while the conversation continues, the dialogue option already appears on the screen. Thus players choose a response before said NPC is done talking and the response flows naturally afterwards. It is possible to stop the conversation by delaying the response, but that's your problem, not the game's. Given all the different choices and how they will affect the game, there are no doubt thousands upon thousands of lines recorded for *Mass Effect*.



A CLASS OF YOUR OWN



Mass Effect allows you to really make the main character look like you – or anyone you want. Granted, he/she has to remain human and there's little say over body size, but the facial options are as elaborate as some sports games, like the *Tiger Woods* series, allow. But the real meat is in your character stats. At the base is your three origin options: a Spacer was born on star ships, a Colonialist comes from the colony planet Mindor, while Earthborns took up baby wards on this planet. The origins are a subtle choice, largely changing how you are referred to in conversations, but there are also some skills tied to the backgrounds. The same goes for the three options to define the type of person your character is: a Sole Survivor was the only person to make it out of a battle alive, the War Hero is a highly decorated military man, while a Ruthless character will get the job done, regardless.



Finally we have the classes, while talents are the various talents (skills) you will be able to level up. Some talents are unique or better with certain classes. There will be six classes to choose from:

Soldier: Loves weapons and will put up a good fight if you need serious firepower.

Engineer: This class carries the Omni-tool, which allows characters to hack systems, repair things and heal party members.

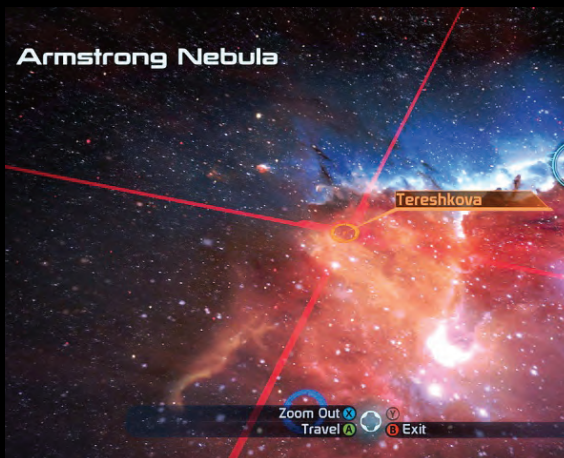
Adept: Adepts can harness Biotic powers, which is really just space-talk for magic.

Infiltrator: This class combines the skills of the soldier and engineer.

Sentinel: If you need some engineering combined with the magic of Biotics, this is your class.

Vanguard: Can anyone say "Battle Mage"? Sentinels combine an adept's Biotics and the soldier's weapons abilities.





CHARIOTS OF HELL-FIRE

Listening to the *Mass Effect* soundtrack brought a lump to our throats. That's because we loved the edgy alien vibes created with electronic music in the timeless *Bladerunner*. Bioware's new game has a similar feel, thanks to the composing work of Jack Wall and Sam Hulick. Hulick is a rising talent in game music and is best known for making provocative and complex electronic music. Wall is the veteran, having scored over thirty games that include the *Myst* series, *Splinter Cell* and *Jade Empire*.

Apart from the highly emotive models, the game itself also looks really, really good. Stupidly so – the cut-scenes in *Mass Effect* are all rendered in-game by the engine. If the visuals of this game is any indication, it is clear that we'll have to wait a while longer before the 360 and PlayStation 3 stop equaling each other visually. Due to the character creation process, Bioware can't cheat and insert pre-rendered video into the game, so what you see is what you get. How that will affect load times and level sizes remains to be seen, but visually *Mass Effect* is beyond impressive and oozes ambience. Bioware is clearly going all-out with this game and refuses to cling to convention just because it's there. Commander Sheppard's journeys through the Milky Way look poised to change RPG as we know and love it. Just like *The Elder Scrolls: Oblivion* made gamers fall back in love with first-person role-playing, *Mass Effect* will convert the masses back to real digital RPGs – where you have to consider the consequences of your actions as much as the damage your über sword/super energy weapon can do. **NAG**

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING

HALO 3 [360]

It seems that the game to finally make PC-exclusive FPS players move over to the Dark Side of console FPS has arrived. There isn't a person in the office who isn't playing *Halo 3* – including the stalwart PC-exclusive gamers who, once they stopped griping about the control scheme like noobs, finally started enjoying themselves. Finish the Fight (on Legendary, if you want the proper ending after the credits).

TEAM FORTRESS 2 [PC]

It's good! It's really, really good! It has style, pizzazz and best of all, is really fun to play. The class interactions are solid and once a few bugs and balance issues are sorted out, *Team Fortress 2* will be the one to make the brand known. As a *Quake* modification, *Team Fortress* was well loved but not well known. *Team Fortress 2* will be known. The Japanese are certainly enamoured with it, oddly enough.

ENEMY TERRITORY: QUAKE WARS [PC]

The *Battlefield* 'genre' is realised in *Quake Wars* with polish and attention to detail, and those who like the 'genre' are enjoying *Quake Wars* quite happily. There seems to be some balance issues with regards to the two sides, but depending on who you ask, the side with the balance issues changes. Stalwart *Battlefield* players will probably stick to *Battlefield 2* or *2142*, but there's more than enough room for another game in this genre.

SKATE [360]

Our beloved Editor couldn't play a *Tony Hawk* game to save his life, but he's shaping up to be quite the skate pro. With it's *GTA*-esque freedom to just go where you want and do what you wanna do (as long as it involves your skateboard), *skate* is like a vacation you can switch on when you need it and quit when you're tired of being hit by cars. Own the Spot in Party Play is proving to be a favourite, not that anyone actually lands a trick.

JERICHO [PS3]

Just as *Undying* had its fans, *Jericho* will have its fans. It's a good FPS with some slick elements (like the team-ability management) and buckets of atmosphere, but could have really done with some co-op. We're having some issues with the PS3 version and framerate, but Codemasters did mention that the review code we had been sent has "Known Issues". If those "Known Issues" are fixed before release, *Jericho* will be an FPS to have if you have a PS3 and like FPSs.

084



094



095



080



098



WEB SCORES

STRANGLEHOLD [360]



NAG	80
METACRITIC	78
GAMERANKINGS	79

SKATE [360]



NAG	90
METACRITIC	85
GAMERANKINGS	87

HALO 3 [360]



NAG	91
METACRITIC	94
GAMERANKINGS	94



099



088



082



092



076

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 08 [PS3]



NAG	83
METACRITIC	79
GAMERANKINGS	79

MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE [360]



NAG	90
METACRITIC	74
GAMERANKINGS	75

POTC: AT WORLD'S END [360]



NAG	85
METACRITIC	58
GAMERANKINGS	59

THE REVIEWERS

Welcome to NAG QUEST! The evil Galactic Confederacy has stolen the SS NAG's text parser, and the intrepid crew has embarked on an epic 1,056-point voyage to retrieve a new one.

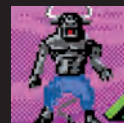
Captain James Francis

The Captain once fought off a flock of Keronian orats armed only with his goatee. He doesn't remember it, though.



Commander Miktar Dracon

Rescued from the slave pits of Grrrack ten years previously, Miktar is a devoted officer and formidable wrestler.



Lt. Commander Adam Liebman

Like all archetypal androids before him, Adam longs to be human. In the meantime, he dreams of electric sheep.



Ensign Eddie Francis

The ship's engineer, Eddie spends most of his time hiding in the janitor's closet and playing Guitar Hero DCLXIV.



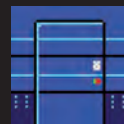
Ensign Justin Slabbert

Justin is a young recruit from Ganymede, desperately saving his credits for a graphics enhancement.



Tarryn van der Byl

This hired goon has been locked in the brig since her last coup attempt. Next time, it'll be the airlock.



Ambassador Walt Pretorius

Walt is secretly a corporate spy for the Galactic Confederacy, hoping to steal the secrets of SS NAG's hyperdrive.



"Michael James"

The crew has taken to calling him that, but nobody actually knows what he - or it - really is.



mmmmmm ... SHINY!

A quick guide to the NAG reviews section

PCSPEC: Will this game rape your machine, or make it fly? Check the box at the bottom right for an explanation on our fancy hardware rating system.

VITAL INFO: A game can't survive without these vitals, so you should probably pay attention to them.

BETTER THAN/WORSE THAN: Everything is relative, right? Because of that, we keep making comparisons between games in this space, and try to be funny about it.

SCORE: You only care about this number, we know that. But try to pretend you read the reviews because they're so insightful and informative. Thank you, we love you.



PLATFORMS: The brightest block is the platform on which the game was reviewed. Dimmer blocks are platforms on which the game also appears. Simple.

GAME NAME: This is the important bit, and you might want to write it down somewhere just in case you need it later.

AWARDS: You won't find these NAG awards, given to games of merit, anywhere but in NAG. Truth.

BOTTOM LINE: It all comes down to this, and the words written here will shape the future, moulding it towards gaming excellence.

ICONS: Check the list on the right for our frikkin' sweet icons, distilling the essence of games even further, just for you.

DISTRIBUTOR LIST

For your convenience, the numbers of the distribution companies

Aleat Distribution	[011] 888-8916	Logitech SA	[011] 656-3375
Apex Interactive	[012] 347-9956	Look & Listen	[011] 467-3717
Asbis	[011] 848 7000	Megarom	[011] 361-4800
ASUS SA	[011] 783-5450	Microsoft	[011] 265-3000
Axiz	[011] 237-7000	MiDigital	[011] 723-1800
Comstar	[011] 314-5812	MobileG	084 245 5400
Comstek	0860 600-557	Nology	[012] 657-1317
Corex	[011] 238-2315	Nu Metro	[011] 280-0600
Cosmic Comics	[011] 476-9640	Pinnacle	[011] 265-3000
Creative	[011] 849-2021	Proton Technology	[011] 466-8888
Devon	[041] 365-0258	Rectron	[011] 203-1000
EA South Africa	[011] 516-8300	Sahara	[011] 542-1000
Esquire	0861 70 0000	Sapphire ATI	[044] 384-0225
Eurobyte	[011] 234-0142	Sonic Informed	[011] 805-3800
Frontosa	[011] 466-0038	Ster Kinekor Games	[011] 445-7960
Greenstone Interactive	[021] 557-6248	Syntech	086 127 4244
Intel Corporation	[011] 806-4530	The Outer Limits	[011] 482-3771
Legend Memory	[011] 314-0817	WWE	[011] 462-0150

If your company isn't listed here, phone NAG on [011] 704-2679

THE REVIEW ICONS

The NAG review icons aim to help you get a better idea of what a game is like, while giving us less work to do in the review. Everyone wins, so best memorise this list below and look out for them in the Review score box.

- ACTION:** When you gotta blast, smash, crash and mash your way to victory, it's Action.
- BABYSITTING:** Put the kids to bed, you gotta Babysit this game to make it love you.
- BITCHIN':** When a game just plain rocks despite everything, then it is worthy of the Bitchin'.
- BORING:** Grab your blanket and teddy, we might be in for some Boring to put you to sleep.
- BUGGY:** Truth be told, there is just no excusing a Buggy game because games aren't cheap.
- CASH-IN/LICENSE:** Some companies totally Cash-in on License games, good or bad.
- CINEMATIC:** Sweet-ass cut-scenes, dramatic camerawork and awesome scenes are Cinematic.
- CLONE:** We've seen it before and we'll see it again, because people always Clone good stuff.
- COMPETITIVE:** You don't think Ranked Match is a feature; you think it should be mandatory.
- FOREIGN:** No clue what the game is about or even what is said? Confusing plot? Careful, it might be Foreign!
- ONLINE:** For games that play well with others and generally mean playing with others, Online.
- PARTY:** Get some friends and move the couch, Party games are frikkin' sweet.
- PIECE OF POO:** Sometimes no matter how hard you try, you just can't squeeze a diamond out of a turd.
- STUPID PEOPLE:** Don't worry little buddy, this game holds your hand like a friend.
- ALL AGES:** These games contain no violence, immoral acts or anything that might narrow the demographic, but they may still be difficult.
- KID FRIENDLY:** Kids can play this game without needing an adult every five minutes to explain to them what button to press.
- 16+ RESTRICTION:** If you're 16 or over, you are well within your rights to play this game.
- 18+ RESTRICTION:** If you are not yet 18, please put down this game and back away slowly before the police come and arrest you.
- MULTIPLAYER:** The number on the controller icon indicates the maximum number of people who can play at the same time.

WILL IT RUN? - PC GAME SPECS

PC game specs are a pain for us, because we need to list them for those people who don't consult the box before buying a game. Instead, the reviews will now have a nice number ranking on the side. Higher numbers mean a game is more machine intensive. If a game has all the numbers lit up, it'll run on a 5-year-old piece of junk up to the most bad-ass of machines.

- Your machine has a DirectX 10 graphics card, a dual-core or higher CPU and 2GB or more RAM. You are the centre of gaming-fu. This game will honour your investment. **[DX10 graphics card; dual-core CPU; 2GB+ RAM]**
- Your graphics card has a respectable 256MB of memory and your CPU sits at the higher end of 2GHz, backed by 1-2GB of RAM. A worthy rig for a worthy game. **[256MB graphics card with DX9; 2GHz or more; 1-2GB RAM]**
- Your card sits between 128 and 256MB of RAM with at least DirectX 8 support, while your 2GHz Pentium 4 churns happily with between 512MB and 1GB of RAM. We assume you're slowly saving for an upgrade. **[256MB+ graphics card with DX8; 2GHz Pentium 4; 512MB-1GB RAM]**
- Okay, so you have a graphics card that falls below the 128MB memory point but supports DX8, a chip that you can't call 2GHz even if you wanted and you have 256MB or less RAM. Your PC might be getting more Office action than you'd like to admit. **[128MB or lower graphics card with DX8; Below 2GHz chip; 256MB or lower RAM]**
- You really don't think about your PC specs much. In fact, any hint of upgrade money is spent on something more practical, like a coffee maker with a timer. Fresh coffee first thing in the morning always beats playing games. **[Can run XP, will play game]**



FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

www.frontosa.co.za

JHB +27 11 466 0038 | CT +27 21 551 4411





HALO 3

SOMETIMES A GAME LAUNCHES with so much overbearing hype, one feels almost compelled to dislike the game on principle. In the case of *Halo 3*, the hype has certainly lived up to the millions of dollars thrown at advertising to make sure everyone and their dog know that *Halo 3* is coming, that *Halo 3* is awesome, that *Halo 3* cures cancer.

It doesn't cure cancer, but it does give you value for your money and a solid, quality action experience if you're willing to stop being so fussy and just ignore the hype already. Yes, the hype is too much – but it's not entirely undeserved. The first *Halo* owes its success in part to being at the right place at the right time (in dorm rooms across the United States on a powerful, exciting and new console aimed at the American market), as well as to being just the right type of game for the demographic that bought the console – college students. *Halo* was to the new-breed console generation what *Doom* was to the new-breed PC gaming generation: a fun single-player FPS, but more importantly, an excellent multiplayer FPS that allowed four people to

deathmatch or CTF on only one system, which naturally widened the exposure dramatically. *Halo* sold Xboxes, *Halo 2* sold even more Xboxes and *Halo 3* (according to the figures) is selling more Xbox 360s.

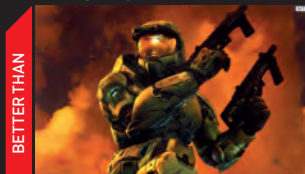
It's not the best game in the world and it has its problems depending on who you ask: Some people say the visuals aren't as impressive as they could be; others say they have no interest in the multiplayer and that the single-player is too short (if you consider around 10 hours to complete the campaign short). Others complain for the sake of complaining and some people will never be happy.

For a change, let the game speak for itself: It has up to four-player cooperative through the single-player campaign, either split-screen, System Link or even on Xbox LIVE. It has a quasi level-editor called Forge, which lets you create your own variations of the multiplayer maps. You can create new game types by adjusting existing ones (with enough variety for true creation). It records everything you do, letting you replay classic deathmatch or campaign moments – you can even save them

NAG>>>>
EDITOR'S CHOICE



Halo 2 [Xbox]



Halo 1 [Xbox]



BOTTOM LINE

It's frikken Halo – you either dig it, or you don't. If you do, great. If you don't, give it a try at least.

91
OUT OF 100





SECOND OPINION

A PC SHOOTER FAN SPEAKS...

This is a quick overview of the experiences of a hardcore PC first-person shooter fan and *Halo 3* on the Xbox 360 with a console controller – the horror. Well actually not really. If you're going to get your clutch on with an FPS on a console then it might as well be playing the biggest game in the history of ever. Yes, the almighty *Halo 3* is quite the event... It's got more style, character and substance than almost any other game you care to mention. It's epic in the way that it makes you feel when you've finished it, left clinging to, and savouring the experience while the music plays and the credits roll. The conversion process from PC shooter fan to console shooter 'player' is a long and painful journey, but perseverance and dedication pay dividends, because once you get it down, the game becomes something you simply have to finish.

The graphics, when compared to something like *Assassin's Creed*, aren't quite as polished as you might expect and there are some tiresome sections here and there – especially those that make you track back through an area you've just finished clearing, but now with more monsters. The game also doesn't quite hold colour all the way through with a peculiar race to the finish that doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the game. But all of this is easily dismissed because *Halo 3* is solid gold that effortlessly overcomes the challenges of all the ridiculous hype and palaver that preceded it. The game pulls off the thrills by expertly mixing together cut-scenes and breathtaking set-piece sequences with sporadic fire fights, some driving, flying and button pushing. The story and characters are equally engaging, especially so if you've played the previous games.

Halo 3 is a remarkable achievement and definitely worth giving up the mouse and keyboard for a few hours. Let's face it: if you haven't played and finished the biggest game ever you can't really call yourself a well-rounded gamer [and we're not talking about that eating 'disorder' either].

Michael James

90
OUT OF 100



to view as videos online alongside screenshots you may have taken and your statistics/records, such as wins/losses and more. You can share your experiences, which is a very powerful mechanic if implemented right – but that judgement is ultimately left up to the player and how much they want to involve themselves.

It's a little cheesy and the plot really isn't as "omfgepic" as they make it sound, but it's an action game with an action movie style plot. Bring the popcorn and stop being so serious. The campaign is meaty with plenty of diversity. The multiplayer side of *Halo 3* is truly near perfect in execution with only a few bumps, but to elaborate on the multiplayer will take quite a few pages: suffice to say, it is robust, and has more than enough functionality and polished implementation to ensure that *Halo 3* will be a multiplayer favourite for possibly over a decade before losing steam. After all, people still play *Doom* multiplayer these days, in obscure corners of the Internet. *Doom* was great, but it wasn't the best game ever... **NAG**

Miktar "Arbiter" Dracon



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 08 (360)

THE MAIN REASON FOR playing sports titles is to become involved in something that's beyond the grasp of ordinary people, yet with a very real connection to the world around us. Okay, it's a theory, but it's a good one. Moreover, if the theory is to be accepted, few games allow the kind of immersion that the *Tiger Woods PGA Tour* franchise from EA does.

For a number of years now, the *Tiger Woods* games have delivered excellent golf simulations – so good, in fact, that they're the market leaders by an incredibly large margin. The few other golf simulations out there have had to rely on things other than realism in an attempt to make an impression because EA Sports has realism tied up with this series.

The move to the Xbox 360 created a very favourable situation: finally, games can deliver a higher level of graphics and sound, enhancing the realism of the game even more. The 08 edition has taken this realism to the next level, introducing a concept that, while possibly a bit of added fluff, does go a long way to enhance the experience. Basically, this new feature, called Photo Game Face, allows the player to insert his or her own likeness into the game. It's a fairly lengthy procedure, involving police-style mug shots and a LIVE connection, but seeing your own face on the golfer on the screen is quite a kick.

Another new addition to the game (aside from new golf courses and players, of course) is the implementation of player confidence. By taking previous performances into account – the type of shot being played and

the particular hole being played – and combining those with performance on the day, the character's confidence level is determined. This results in a better performance, should confidence be high. It's a great addition to the title, and one that makes a lot of sense. If the player performed well at Hole 12 of the Pebble Beach course, why shouldn't he or she perform well again? This is a perpetual tally as well: it's saved as part of the player profile.

Another addition is actually a return of an old concept. An alternate control method has been put in play, allowing the player to make use of the old 'three-click' system that golf sims of yore made use of. While it seems a little archaic next to the analogue stick 'swing', the three-click system allows a greater degree of precision in determining shot power. It's very handy for those tricky little chips onto the green, and can be switched on and off as the player desires.

Other than that, there's very little new in the game. It seems that a bug or two has crept in (particularly in the Tiger Challenge mode), but nothing that could be deemed as insurmountable. What we're dealing with here is an excellent golf simulation... exactly what was expected. **NAG**

Walt Pretorius



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07



Golf



BETTER THAN

FOR FANS OF



BOTTOM LINE

It's exactly what one would expect from the next Tiger Woods game.

88
OUT OF 100



NAG MUST PLAY



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 08 (PS3)

RRP→ R599 | Publisher→ EA Sports | Distributor→ EA South Africa | Genre→ Sports

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 08 brings some new features and tournaments never before seen in the series, like the all-new FedEx Cup in which players must earn points throughout a season to compete and ultimately win this trophy. Then there's also the all-new shot confidence gauge, which calculates every shot's various attributes and effects for the next time a player makes that kind of shot. The graphics are top notch and for once, players can actually import their own photographs into the game and create realistic-looking mini-mes.

The game starts off very difficult with the first few rounds leaving you feeling like throwing the game through a window, but if you can make it past this and earn some better skills, the game most certainly does pick up from there. Of course, if you want to just have a quick round of golf, you could always play as one of the professionals. These professionals include some favourites like Tiger Woods, Retief Goosen, Adam Scott, and many others. There are also many of the LPGA characters available for play.

There are thousands of customisations for players' characters, not to mention the various items that can be purchased, all of which look great and could give a boost to your skill or even give a financial boost if you have the right sponsorships.

The gameplay itself takes a bit of getting used to and like previous versions, has two different input methods: the three-click and the analogue stick swing. However, this time both of these can be changed with a simple click of the right stick, allowing for a nice balance if you prefer one style for those finer shots.

The game unfortunately lacks a bit in terms of course variety, but that is to be expected when you consider how many different courses there actually are. Many of the previously seen courses have been cut and replaced by a few extremely detailed ones.

On the graphics side, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour* has taken some giant strides with

impressive models and shading. The courses look realistic with the grass layers actually looking photorealistic. I would love to see the polygon count used on just one tree. The lighting makes good use of bloom effects and while the game doesn't look nearly as good on an older TV, it's still quite a sight. The game features HD resolutions of 1080, which, for those who have the hardware to support it, makes the game look like it's played in the Garden of Eden.

If you're a fan of golf games, then this is definitely a must-have. If this is your first time playing a golf simulation and if you can figure out the controls and get past the first few rounds, the game becomes extremely addictive. **NAG**

Justin Slabbert

Everybody's Golf



Winning the Masters



BOTTOM LINE

Finally, a realistic golf sim for the PS3.

83
OUT OF 100



...this is my club.





MULTIPLAYER

skate might be a great game to play, but the multiplayer side of things isn't as much fun. The most ideal game mode is Freeski, which allows various players to just mess around on a level. Unfortunately, the more people joined, the more our connection (4Mbps ADSL) slowed down. It wasn't terrible, since *skate* compensates for lag by slowing the game down, but it can be annoying. The movie upload, download and view service, though, were just plain frustrating and extremely slow to download. It took at least two minutes to get a three- or four-second chunk of footage. To irritate gamers everywhere even more, EA decided not to include system link support. What gives?

SKATE

JUST LIKE THE ETERNAL schoolyard divide between skateboarders and rollerbladers, a fictional dividing line has been drawn between Activision's *Tony Hawk* franchise and EA's new contender franchise, *skate*. If you run with the Hawk you'd better not be flirtn with the EeeAaah crew, foo. Or, if you're a fan of the *skate*, you'd better not be dissn' the Hawk – or you might just find yourself on the receiving end of a faking varial 360 nollie kickflip to the face.

Petty differences aside, *skate* is a damn fine skateboarding game and possibly the best breath of fresh air into the idea of skateboarding games since *Skate or Die* (or *California Games*, if you wanna play it that way). That's not to say *skate* is perfect. In fact, sometimes you may wonder if EA actually bothered to test the stupid thing before shoving it out the door in time to beat *Tony Hawk's Proving Ground* to the punch – but even with all of its problems and bugs, if you like what *skate* has to offer, you'll simply find the patience to deal with its quirks.

The control scheme is new, different and allows for a lot of personal style when it comes to laying down a nice line down the street if you enjoy street skating or on the ramps if you enjoy vert (vertical ramp). The use of the right analogue for board control really does let you define yourself in your style as well as in your ability – if you bail in *skate* it's because of your timing or just plain bad luck (you can switch cars and pedestrians off in Free Skate mode, thankfully). The game is beautiful, with terrifically understated environments and

visuals, taking a lot of inspiration and cues from contemporary skateboarding promo videos, including the fish-eye lens effect. It's not all aesthetic; the fish-eye effect, for example, actually makes paying attention to the important stuff – the board and the road below it – much easier, as well as highlighting your ability with the board effectively.

There are a lot of clever ideas in *skate*, such as how music plays at good skating spots, but all you hear elsewhere is the rumble of the city or the sounds of nature (or casual conversation between people). Bullet Time does feature, but is equally understated and only kicks in automatically when you exceed a previous trial (such as holding a manual for a further distance than before). The Line Meter is a much more effective substitute for the Combo system in *Tony Hawk*, due to its more forgiving nature (you don't have to rely on stringing tricks together with manuals all the time).

You can save clips, screenshots and share them easily enough. The multiplayer is near-broken thanks to EA's increasingly frustrating habit of wanting to run their own servers and services instead of relying on established, quality services (such as LIVE) – and forget about System Link. If you manage to punch your way past EA's horrible online implementation, you can skate free with each other, race or party-play at an Own The Spot. There is single-system hotseat action in the Party mode (well worth inviting friends over for).

It's good, it really is. If you've never liked skateboarding games because you felt they were too over-the-top or cartoony, or if you

feel the demands of the constant-combo in Hawk is just too much like an arcade game, give *skate* a try (the demo is on LIVE). Hawk fans don't need to stop playing Hawk offerings – *skate* simply fills a niche previously left empty. **NAG**

Miktar "Olliewollie" Dracon



AS 6000 AS

Tonk Hawk's Pro Skater

AS FUN AS

Skateboarding without the Pain

BOTTOM LINE

It's really, really, good if you can forgive the rough edges and stereotypical EA stupidity.

90

OUT OF 100

1084

LG recommends Windows Vista™ Business



Pitch Perfect



CI EXPRESS DUAL

10.6" Widescreen
Ultra Slim Convertible Tablet PC



ZI PRO EXPRESS DUAL

12.1" Widescreen
Multimedia Powerhouse

SI PRO EXPRESS DUAL

15.4" Widescreen
smART Entertainer

TI EXPRESS DUAL

14" Widescreen
Ultra Slim Entertainer

AI EXPRESS DUAL

10.6" Widescreen
Ultra Portable Entertainer

Powered by Intel® Centrino® Duo Processor Technology, based on Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor.



Available from - Bethesda Computers: +27 (0)12 348 1116 www.bethesda.co.za, Dion: www.dion.co.za, Game: www.game.co.za, Pinnacle Micro: +27 (0)11 265 3000 www.pinnacle.co.za, Rectron: +27 (0)11 203 1000 www.rectron.net, TVR Computers: +27 (0)11 807 1390 www.tvr.co.za.

Celeron, Celeron Inside, Centrino, Core Inside, Intel, Intel Core, Intel Inside, Intel SpeedStep, Intel Viv, Intel Xeon, Itanium, Itanium Inside, Pentium, Pentium Inside, the Centrino logo, the Intel logo and the Intel Inside logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries.

For more information visit <http://za.lge.com> or call our Customer Care Line 0800 LG LG LG



JOHN WOO PRESENTS STRANGLEHOLD

IT SEEMS THAT FILMMAKERS—some of them, at least—really like the idea of videogames. This particular title sees two newcomers to the arena: action director John Woo and actor Chow Yun-Fat. In addition to using these two well-known Hong Kong action celebrities, *Stranglehold* ties in with one of Woo's films. It's the "sequel" to *Hard Boiled*, meaning that familiar characters enter the mix too, particularly in the form of the hard-hitting (and poorly-named) Inspector Tequila.

Trying to capture Woo's cinematic feel in a videogame isn't easy. His visually driven films are something of a challenge as far as that is concerned, although the developers in this case found a way to get close. The game is very story driven, with lots of game engine cut-scenes and special moves that are more cinematic than part of the game dynamic. The spin attack, for example, shows a very Woo-esque scene of Tequila spinning in a circle with guns blazing, while enemies drop like flies. It even has gentle, soothing music and a flight of doves.

If a comparison must be made between games, *Stranglehold* is reminiscent of *Max Payne*. The only things that set it apart are the involvement of Chow Yun-Fat and the fact that *Stranglehold* is more about style... Racking up a high body count with as much finesse as possible is the best way to get through this. To assist the player in this pursuit, a version of bullet-time (called Tequila Time)

has been included. The levels also feature a number of options for stunt-style action. The player may find him or herself offing bad guys while sliding down a banister, or taking them down while rolling along on a serving trolley. Additionally, the environments allow style to be racked up by providing hazards. Why shoot a guy in the face when blasting the gas bottle next to him or sign above him will have more impressive results?

Another mention must be made of the environments because they're so wonderfully breakable. Virtually everything in a given area can be blown to bits. In fact, part of the summary that's displayed on completing a level is a tally of the amount of damage caused, in dollar terms. There's a certain satisfaction that comes into play when, after a level is completed, the player can survey the mess...

Stranglehold is a pretty game and very easy to control. The voice acting is good (with Chow Yun-Fat possibly doing the worst job), and the musical score is lovely. It's a great game, but it's one of those titles you'll either love or hate. The dynamics behind the game are far more arcade-like than *Max Payne* was, and the game itself is a bit short (although multiplayer is an option). If, however, you approach the game in the spirit that it was developed in – as a tribute to the cinematic work of John Woo – then you'll love it. It's one area where the game works

incredibly well; it's a brilliant homage to the work of the Hong Kong action director and to the genre itself. **NAG**

Walt Pretorius



ARES-100H

5.1 POWERED AUDIO

- PAccurate sound position,
- Best choice of gaming
- High performance driver for optimum sound quaity
- Built-in satellite control placed for quick, convenient access



XFORCE 1

2.1 POWERED AUDIO

- Improve the depth and breadth of your music with unparalleled distortion-free bass
- Unbelievable high-quality audio performance
- High performance driver for optimum sound quaity
- Wired remote control features volume, mp3 input and earphone jack





PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END

JACK SPARRRRRRRRROW! OKAY, SURE, we all fell asleep during the second movie and *Pirates of the Caribbean* was really only supposed to be one film. You could hear the milking sounds a mile away, but in the end it was still a lot of fun. From a personal point of view, I loved the films and intend to get the box-set. But that might be blamed on a childhood diet of *Monkey Island* and *The Goonies*. Regardless, the trilogy made an obscene amount of money and everyone dug Johnny Depp's camp rogue pirate that couldn't seem to stay out of trouble. Actually, William Turner couldn't stay out of trouble. Jack Sparrow simply is trouble, as is clear from the extensive list of enemies he made.

Some of that could be explored in the lacklustre *Legend of Jack Sparrow*, a dodgy game that was really only saved because it copied *God of War* as much as it could. The idea was there and Jack telling some of his tall tales had a charm to it. But at the end of the day, it's something best left for bargain bins. So, a degree of animosity surrounded the game of the third film. More accurately, it covers the last two films, starting with Jack escaping from prison. From there, the game loosely follows the plot of the film, hitting key points but generally doing its own thing. You'll visit all the prime locations, but what the characters get up to differ. The second film's part is more coherent, but the third one takes some wild liberties. The thing is, though, that does little to take away

the shine from *At World's End*.

Let's cut to the chase. This game is good, good enough to consider spending your cash on. Initially, things seem pretty drab. The jail environment doesn't show much of anything except the nice character animation and that wet things look pretty good. Likewise, the character movement seems sluggish and the controls a bit weird. On top of that, the combat is not particularly difficult. But things start looking up around the time Jack hits his first duel. This is an interesting way to have a boss fight. You have to counter the blows of your opponent by pressing up, down and forward, then take advantage at the right time and make the other guy dodge your own blows. It's hard to explain on paper, but in practice it works great, plus it allows the game to create a cinematic fight scene since it has control of the camera.

After that, things really step into motion. This is a very pretty game and a lot of time was obviously spent to make the levels look rich and inviting. Combine that with the very nice animation, right down to Sparrow's mince if you tilt the left analogue gently. Throw in some great lighting and it's already *Pirates of the Caribbean* in every detail.

The game holds up as well and though the combat system is very simple – this is a licensed game, after all – you hardly stop having fun. Perhaps the only real problem is that it won't take long to finish. Granted, one cannot compare this to a triple-A title like



Gears of War, but it stands strong on its own and sets another example of a very well-done licensed game. At the very least, fans should really check it out. **NAG**

James Francis

BETTER THAN

Legend of Jack Sparrow

FOR FANS OF

Pirates of the Caribbean

BOTTOM LINE

Pretty, fun and simple – a great licensed game.

85

OUT OF 100

SURVIVAL OF THE FASTEST

Carve up the competition
in brutal six-car battles
on fully deforming tracks.



"Forget MotorStorm and McRae, this is the
next-gen off-road racer that reminds you why
you bought a PS3 in the first place."

PSW

SEGA RALLY™

RALLY RACING UNLEASHED
28th SEPTEMBER



PLAYSTATION 3 PSP



ask
about
games
.com

SRS
SEGA RACING STUDIO



BUGBEAR
ENTERTAINMENT

SEGA®

www.sega.co.uk

© SEGA, SEGA, the SEGA logo and SEGA Rally are either registered trade marks or trade marks of SEGA Corporation. All rights reserved. All trademarks used herein are under license from their respective owners. Ford Oval and nameplates are registered trademarks owned and licensed by Ford Motor Company. Manufactured by SEGA. www.ford.com. The Mobil logo and the flying horse design are trademarks of the Exxon Mobil Oil Corporation or one of its subsidiaries. Manufactured and distributed by SEGA with kind consent of SKODA AUTO a.s. (www.skoda-auto.com). Copyright and reproduction rights to the trademark, samples, and models granted by SKODA AUTO a.s. All rights reserved. "PS", "PSP" and "UMD" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox Live, and the Xbox, Xbox 360, and Xbox Live logos are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved.

All the construction ruined the view



MEDAL OF HONOR: AIRBORNE

I'M A BIG FAN of WWII games, especially when they're as historically accurate as possible. I've enjoyed the *Medal of Honor* series so far, and when news of a new title with next-gen graphics hit, I was speechless. I was absolutely blown away by the game when I first played it. It truly is a terrific game and captures the essence of what it must have been like to be a paratrooper in WWII, making the game one of the NAG staff members' new favourites. Not only is *Airborne* realistic, but it's a visual feast as well. The graphics are unbelievable and contributes to the realism of the game.

Medal of Honor: Airborne makes great use of the Unreal Engine 3 and all its features. It sports spectacular sound effects with gunshots sounding like the real thing, while a brilliant soundtrack plays in the background. In fact, the soundtrack is so good that I would spend money on purchasing just the music CD (with a compilation of all the song in the game) at one of my local music shops. However, although the graphics are realistic and pure eye candy, the physics, although certainly good, is at times quite unrealistic and frustrating, affecting the overall experience. For example, at certain times, you spot an enemy from a distance, position your reticle on his head, squeeze the trigger, get a perfect headshot and the

enemy is blown backwards appropriately. However, at other times, the enemy just flops down like a Jenga tower when hit. The other aspect of the physics that's a bit of a letdown is the weapon aiming system. While it's a brilliant concept in which you have to aim down the crosshairs of the firearm to truly get an accurate shot, there are occasional times where an enemy just stumbles through the door and even a shot at point-blank range misses. This got a bit frustrating because it lowered the realism slightly – but alas, nothing can be perfect.

Nevertheless, the game's reward system is excellent. For example, if you use a weapon particularly well, you gain experience, which eventually leads to weapon upgrades like scopes or faster-loading ammo clips. Even your accuracy improves slightly with these experience levels.

Another brilliant part of the game is the start of each stage in which you have to parachute in. The player has to steer the parachute towards green smoke signals in order to avoid landing in hazardous locations. However, sometimes it's better to land somewhere else for strategic purposes.

Medal of Honor: Airborne truly is a work of art and should be first on the wish list of anyone who enjoys realistic WWII shooters. **NAG**

Justin "Discount Barber" Slabbert



BETTER THAN

Call of Duty 3

KINDA LIKE

Watching Saving Private Ryan

BOTTOM LINE
 WWII has never looked so good.

90

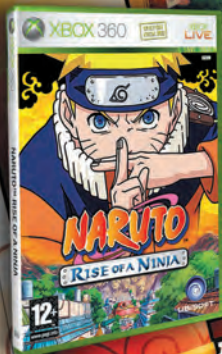
OUT OF 100

NARUTO™

RISE OF A NINJA

THE JOURNEY
BEGINS THIS NOVEMBER

ONLY ON
XBOX 360



EXPLORE KONOHA VILLAGE AND ITS SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENTS
IN FULL 3D - RECREATED STRAIGHT FROM THE ANIME.



TRAIN WITH KAKASHI-SENSEI AND MASTER YOUR
CHAKRA IN EXERCISES LIKE TREE CLIMBING
RETRIEVAL MISSIONS AND MORE.



BUILD UP YOUR FIGHTING TECHNIQUES
TO DEFEAT DEADLY ENEMIES
IN FAST PACED COMBAT AND CHALLENGE FRIENDS
IN THE BATTLE FIELD OF YOUR CHOICE ON THE XBOXLIVE®

www.narutoriseofaninja.com

megarom
interactive
www.megarom.co.za

Tel: +27 11 361 4800
sales@megarom.co.za

 **XBOX 360** LIVE

Naruto™ Rise of a Ninja © 2007 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved.
Ubisoft and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the US and/or other countries. © 2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO.
This product is manufactured, distributed and sold under license from TV TOKYO CORPORATION & SHUEISHA INC. All Rights Reserved.

UBISOFT®



OMG! There's the
purse I've been
looking for!

AMERICAN CHOPPER 2: FULL THROTTLE

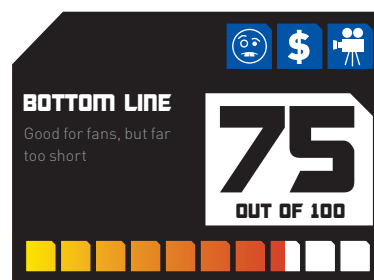
RRP → R349 | Publisher → Activision | Distributor → Apex Interactive | Genre → Racing

THIS GAME MIGHT JUST be the not-so-evil offspring of *Pimp My Ride* and the *Harley-Davidson* games, but with genetics, natural selection and all that, *American Chopper 2* is bigger, better and faster. Yes, we know, with the track record of most movie and TV show licensed games, the best one can hope for is something that doesn't utterly suck. However, *American Chopper 2* proves that a TV show can make for good gaming. You start off by choosing who you want to play as: Paulie, Mikey, Vinnie or Paul Sr. If you love the show, this is where the fun starts: it's like playing a game of the show but with missions thrown in. If you enjoyed the bikes in *GTA*, you might like this game. After building and

painting your own custom chopper, you have to cruise around and do missions. Yes, you do missions to unlock more parts, but these are custom chopper parts and you get to build the biggest, meanest bike on the block and paint it in pretty colours. The missions are fun and difficulty is determined by the character you play: each character has his own story and bike. Did we mention that you get to build big bikes? Slick graphics and cool physics make riding around a blast and you use the right stick to accelerate and brake. In between races, waypoints and those little part bonus thingies you have to find, the characters have little stories that unfold. These are very funny and come to you in funky video form.

However, most importantly, this game allows you to build bikes and build them BIG. **NAG**

Eddie Francis



GHOST RECON ADVANCED WARFIGHTER 2

RRP → R399 | Publisher → Ubisoft | Distributor → Megarom | Genre → Action

OKAY, GRAW 2 IS a bit of a misnomer, as this game is a) actually set between its *GRAW 1* and *2* console / PC siblings, and b) there's none of the squad-based hustle 'n' bustle of other series titles. In fact, the subtle teal colour grading of the training mission is probably its most obvious similarity to previous iterations.

So, the year is 2013. Following a disastrous coup attempt in Mexico City, military intelligence traces the weapons used back to a rebel nest in Colombia. US Army Green Beret Ghost Leader, Captain Scott Mitchell (a name that must look awfully impressive on his cheque book), and his spectral crew are dispatched to neutralise the situation. But while whizzing through hostile airspace, the Ghosts' chopper is gunned down, the team

is scattered, and Scotty must make it alone. What tremendous serendipity that all his hi-tech Advanced Warfighter gadgetry survives the tumble intact, and the brave Captain has all sorts of cool stuff to throw at the locals and make them explode.

The control scheme is initially overwhelming, somewhat cumbersome – the difference between a button tap and a hold is very subtle indeed, especially in the midst of a frenzied grenade-flinging sortie – and a tad overcomplicated in parts, so a few minutes' adjustment time is in order. There's also a lock-on in place to compensate for what might otherwise have been an infuriatingly sluggish camera, and health replenishment just in case you stand in front of a hail of bullets for too long admiring the rather pretty

scenery. Of course, this does render the game a bit easy, but hey, you don't want to be gnawing your PSP in an unbridled display of savagery on a transatlantic flight. **NAG**

Tarryn "Make the grenades come from the sky" van der Byl



There can be only one Powerful and Silent

HYBRID LIQUID COOLING SYSTEM RESERATOR XT

Active/Passive Hybrid Cooling Design
Automatic/Manual Control Modes
Warning & Alarm System
Comprehensive Visual Monitoring Display
Automatic Power ON/OFF
Quick Couplings for Fast, Convenient and
leak free installation & maintenance



High Performance CPU WATER BLOCK

Improved flow circulation by cylindrical fins
Dimple type processing for optimized weight and cooling performance.
Pure copper-base for excellent heat transfer
Broad compatibility with tubes of various sizes



Striking Performance VGA WATER BLOCK

For GeForce 8800 Ultra/GTX and GeForce 8800 GTS
Innovative Dimple-type processing technology for light weight
Pure anodized aluminum base for excellent heat transfer and anti-corrosion
Optimized design for direct cooling of RAM, FET, and I/O chipset
High performance thermal pads





AZADA

RRP → \$7.99 | Publisher → Big Fish Games | Distributor → www.bigfishgames.com | Genre → Puzzle | PC Spec → 1 2 3 4 5

WHILE TRYING TO DEFEAT a magical book of puzzles, a man named Titus did something stupid and got himself caught in the book's world. How he did that you discover as you try and release him. Not that you have a choice. Using the last of his magical powers, Titus transports you to a house where you discover a page of the magical book called Azada. It contains some of the most devious puzzles from the best minds of the ages. Well, not really – if it did no one could play this game. But puzzles there are – and plenty of them. To help save Titus, you'll need to complete the series of puzzles on pages from the book. These can be as simple as spotting two of a kind or rummaging around a room, looking for objects that will uncover another

page. There are traditional puzzles such as moving a limited amount of sticks to form a shape, building a form out of various blocks, a slide puzzle and more. Much more. To be honest, remembering half the puzzles is hard since Azada promises plenty of variation. It's also quite devious – in the initial parts of the game the puzzles are quick and easy, but as the difficulty scales up they become tough and demanding.

All this happens in a point-and-click world that reminds of *Myst*, though everything is confined to the book and the study where you uncover more pages. The closest example to this is the old Sierra *Dr. Brain* series. It's a true puzzle game and will keep you busy for quite a while. The visuals are pretty and the

soundtrack enchants everything. It's a lot of fun to play and should run on most machines. Casual Games Ho! **NAG**

James Francis



BOTTOM LINE
A solid, fun and deceptive puzzle game.

90
OUT OF 100

Progress bar: 10 yellow/orange/red squares, 1 white square.



I swear! It had THIS many polygons!



RAPALA PRO FISHING

RRP → R199 | Publisher → Activision | Distributor → Apex Interactive | Genre → Sport | PC Spec → 1 2 3 4 5

WE HAVE NO SCIENTIFIC proof for this, but if your primal urge to be a hunter has been getting the better of you and if you've been having strange dreams that some doctors may be bribed to diagnose as fishing dreams, don't worry; we might just have a cure for you: *Rapala Pro Fishing*. And as a one-time-only special offer, you won't even get wet at all. "Wow" you might say, "it almost sounds too good to be true..." and we would show you clip after clip of 'credible witnesses' who would claim that, even though it looks nothing like the real thing, it does have insanely low system requirements. They would regale you with magically obscure fishing stories, being sure to mention the hundreds of lure, rods, and real options. You

would say, "Sure, it's a licensed game." Fully licensed, is what we'd say. Up pops the cute blonde, perfectly posed on the boat you get to manoeuvre all on your own. (Hot blonde not included in actual game, but the boat is.) And you have many, many lakes to go to, the choir would sing, as we introduce you to the guy who'll be teaching you. He goes on all your trips and gives you tips. Though he insults you a lot, you can whack him on the head. Moreover, if you bite right now, we'll tell you about the no less than two camera angles. That's right folks, over the shoulder or in the action lure cam. See them fishes before they see you. If this has convinced you, then buy our cure. However, after you've installed it and you realise it's quite bad, there are no

refunds. Just between us, rather go fishing on a real boat. If you really still want it as a game, buy a Wii. **NAG**

Eddie Francis

BOTTOM LINE
At least you can drink while playing this.

65
OUT OF 100

Progress bar: 10 yellow/orange/red squares, 1 white square.

Games

Our PS2 favourites

Get them at a sweet deal...



FIFA 08



The Sims 2
Castaway



Tiger Woods 08



Need For Speed
Pro Street



The Simpsons Game

From **R335**

www.digitalplanet.co.za

Secure. Trusted. Convenient! Online shopping at its best.

*Terms & conditions apply. Prices inclusive of VAT & subject to change without notice. While stocks last. E&OE.



KEEPSAKE

RRP→ R199 | Publisher→ Lighthouse Interactive
Distributor→ Apex Interactive | Genre→ Adventure
Platforms→ PC | PC Spec→ 1 2 3 4 5

LYDIA, A RELENTLESSLY CHEERFUL adolescent of indeterminate age, has just arrived at Dragonvale Academy to be enrolled as a student of the arcane arts. Her best chum, Celeste, had promised to wait for her outside the school, but she's nowhere to be seen. Neither, for that matter, is anyone else – well, apart from an exceedingly annoying twerp with obnoxiously stripy pantaloons, an atrocious accent, and a wagonload of cheap novelties. After slogging around the deserted castle for a bit, Lydia finds a dragon locked in a cupboard. Only, this dragon has been polymorphed into a wolf, and demonstrates some peculiarly undragonish behaviour – a fear of heights, for example. I think the word is “whimsical”.

All cynicism aside, it's not an altogether bad game. It's just not especially good, either. There are far too many screens to traverse to get from one place to another, some of the puzzles are illogical or inane or both, and there's really just not much to do. There's a built-in hint system that should be rather nice, only it all too easily becomes a shortcut for nudging the game along when you're bored of the interminable trudging about. **NAG**

Tarryn “MAKE HER SHUT UP” van der Byl



BOTTOM LINE

Three points subtracted for the abysmal voice acting.

58
OUT OF 100



MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

RRP→ R199 | Publisher→ The Adventure Company
Distributor→ Apex Interactive | Genre→ Adventure
Platforms→ PC | PC Spec→ 1 2 3 4 5

YUGOSLAVIA, 1934. THE ORIENT Express, bound for Paris from Istanbul, is detained amidst the blizzard-whipped mountains outside of Belgrade by an avalanche. Some time in the small hours of the morning, a man is brutally murdered in his cabin. Due to the remoteness and hostility of the surrounding area, it is obvious the perpetrator is still aboard the train. Whodunnit?

More or less exactly like Sierra's *Laura Bow* series of detective point 'n' clickers, *Murder on the Orient Express* has players eavesdropping at doors, asking impertinent questions, and stealing little trinkets from everyone in an effort to solve this heinous crime. The game is exceedingly linear, with the action amounting to little more than doing this, doing that, and clicking the mouse a whole lot while waiting for long-winded suspects to get to the damned point. It's really not all that taxing on your grey stuff, and feels more like an inexorably unfolding narrative that occasionally waits for you to say “Oh, okay” before hurtling forward.

If you've not read the book, however, there's probably just enough suspense to keep you clicking away until the big denouement. Recommended only as a frivolous time waster. **NAG**

Tarryn “It was that guy with that thing in that carriage” van der Byl

BOTTOM LINE

Tedious, but oddly compelling.

46
OUT OF 100



SEAWORLD ADVENTURE PARKS TYCOON 2

RRP→ R249 | Publisher→ Activision Value
Distributor→ Apex Interactive | Genre→ Management
Platforms→ PC | PC Spec→ 1 2 3 4 5

ROLL UP, ROLL UP, and feast your disbelievingocular apparatus upon my park. Behold its unrivaled aquatic splendour, cunningly contrived to appear ten years old. See how, just one week after opening its gates, all improvement research for my park is complete, and I shan't startle you, gentle visitor, with anything new or unexpected apart from these benches and some sort of fancy imported sea lion. Observe that, despite all the trash littering the grounds and suppurating toilets and scandalously overpriced candyfloss, my park is teeming with gormless punters because I have one expensive ride and a killer whale trained to jump in the air without breaking anything. How do I do it? Why, I'm a SeaWorld Adventure Parks Tycoon, of course.

The awesome thing about being a SeaWorld Adventure Parks Tycoon is that it's so easy, anyone can do it. After three hours of placing gift shops, training dolphins, rescuing penguins, and figuring out what the buttons do because the manual is all delightfully mysterious on the topic, you can sit back and just watch your park do its own inimitable thing. Because there's nothing else left to do. **NAG**

Tarryn “Die on my rides” van der Byl



BOTTOM LINE

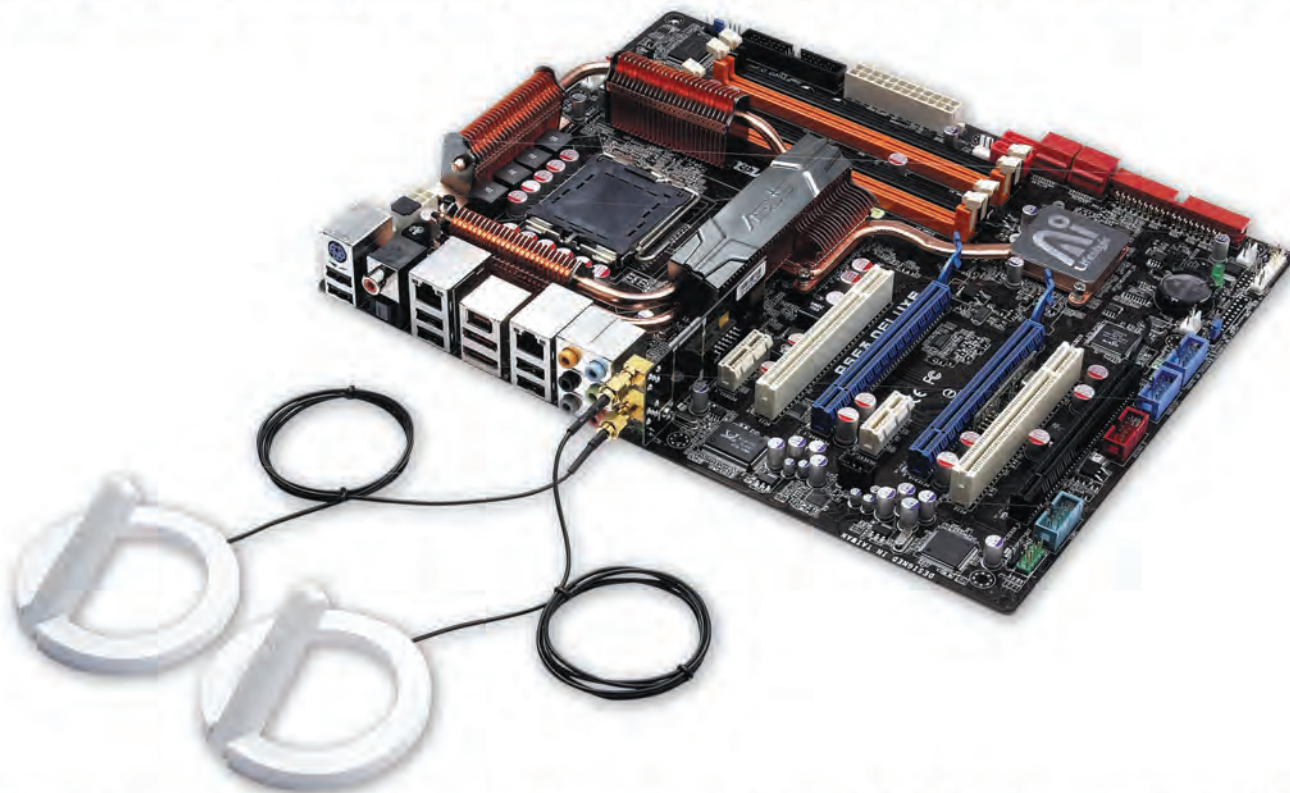
A third-rate Theme Park, but without all the charm, personality, and vomit.

37
OUT OF 100



ASUS P5E3 Series

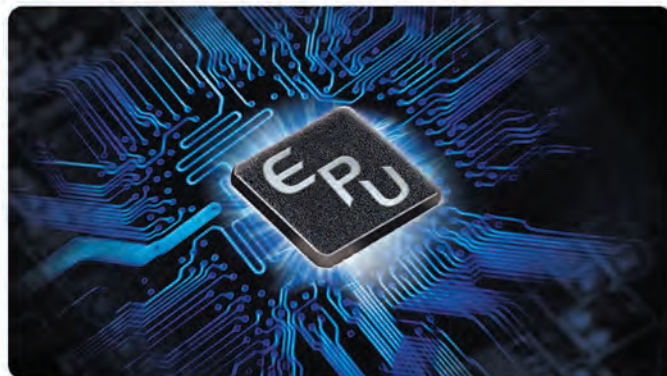
58.6% CPU Power Savings with ASUS EPU



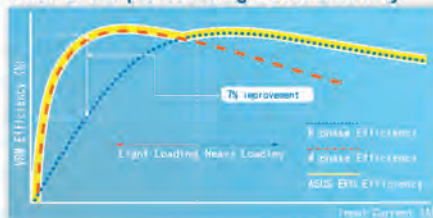
Innovative technology that helps save energy and increase power efficiency to help the environment. That's what ASUS' P5E3 Deluxe and P5E series of motherboards look poised to do. These revolutionary motherboards will utilize ASUS' exclusive EPU technology to maximize power savings automatically for the best possible performance - during heavy or light loadings. Additionally, these Intel®'s X38 chipset motherboards will support DDR3 1333MHz dual-channel memory architecture; and Dual PCI Express 2.0 x16 lanes for doubled graphics speed and bandwidth.

ASUS Exclusive EPU Saves 58.6% CPU Power

The ASUS EPU transcends past PC technologies from manual to automatic voltage adjustments. This new generation automatic energy saving chip utilizes an innovative hybrid power technology to digitally monitor and tune the CPU power supply with improved VR responses in heavy or light loadings. By having real-time automatic detection of CPU voltages, it can provide total control under any loading and attain the best possible power efficiency and fantastic energy savings to help save the environment - automatically providing you with more power for higher performance and saving 58.6% CPU power when your PC is running low intensity applications.



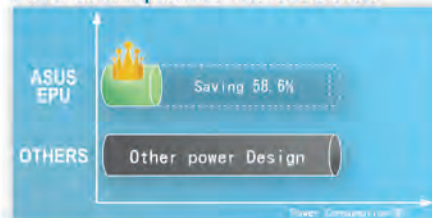
ASUS EPU Improves 7% Light Load Efficiency



Power Consumption with Intel C1E Enable



Power Consumption with Intel C1E Disable



* Shorter is better.

* Shorter is better.

NOKIA: GO PLAY



ON 29 AUGUST, NAG arrived at the Nokia: Go Play media event held in London. The event played host to the unveiling of Nokia's new phones and accessories, but more importantly, their new vision. As a company that has focused primarily on the advancement of their hardware, Nokia's new focus on software and umbrella services comes as an interesting surprise when you consider the entire mobile entertainment industry. Cellphone hardware and features have reached a penultimate equilibrium, or so Nokia believes.

Announced at Go Play was Ovi (which means "door" in Finnish), an "umbrella concept" Internet service that aims to deliver everything a connected, media-centric, social-network-involved individual could want. Ovi is essentially an application that lets you bring in supported services, and those services will be filtered, adjusted and made to fit to whatever phone Ovi is on - it levels the playing ground and lets people check Facebook, YouTube, download music and more regardless of which phone they buy, as long as the phone can support Ovi.

The first services that will be launched later this year for Ovi are the Nokia Music Store, Nokia Maps and N-Gage. More services are expected in 2008 and onwards. The Nokia Music Store will allow the purchase of music directly from the phone or via PC (Ovi will also run on PC).

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, N-Gage returns not as a cellphone trying to

be a handheld gaming device, but as a service - like Ovi - to level the playing field when it comes to mobile games. The new N-Gage platform is not backwards compatible with the first-generation MMC games from the original N-Gage phones, but most of the games are making a comeback as sequels (e.g. *System Rush: Evolution* or *Snakes Subsonic*). N-Gage is now an application you download to your phone (or into Ovi), and it functions as a central hub for all N-Gage functions: you can buy games, check your friends list, try trial versions and more (think Xbox LIVE Arcade but for cellphones). Nokia has managed to gather quite a bit of support behind its new N-Gage initiative. Vivendi Mobile Games, GameLoft, EA and other big publishers are all backing N-Gage and Nokia is acting as a kind of "super-publisher" to ensure that all the games will work flawlessly regardless of which phone the N-Gage application is downloaded onto.

N-Gage games, when purchased, are tied to a user's account and can be downloaded again at any time if you lose your phone or if the games get deleted. You can store the downloaded games either on the device or on any other storage media, like a USB flash drive or on your PC.

The original N-Gage gaming phones were not a runaway success, but the idea held merit (the N-Gage, despite popular belief, did sell a fair amount of units). Nokia obviously believes in its new N-Gage platform and so do the big publishers - a good sign for the future of mobile gaming.

After the event, NAG rocked out with Maroon 5 at the Ministry of Sound (we were the only people who knew who Maroon 5 is). **NAG**



mobile
game

HEROES

THE OFFICIAL MOBILE GAME



NBC  UNIVERSAL

gameloft

Heroes is a copyright of NBC Studios, Inc. Licensed by Universal Studios Licensing LLLP. All Rights Reserved. © 2007 Gameloft. All Rights Reserved. Gameloft and the logo Gameloft are trademarks of Gameloft in the US and/or other countries.



SMS
NAG1202
to 083123686
R50



everywhere you go

PREVIEWS

URBAN ATTACK

Developer→ Vivendi | Publisher→ Vivendi | Genre→ Action | Release→ TBA

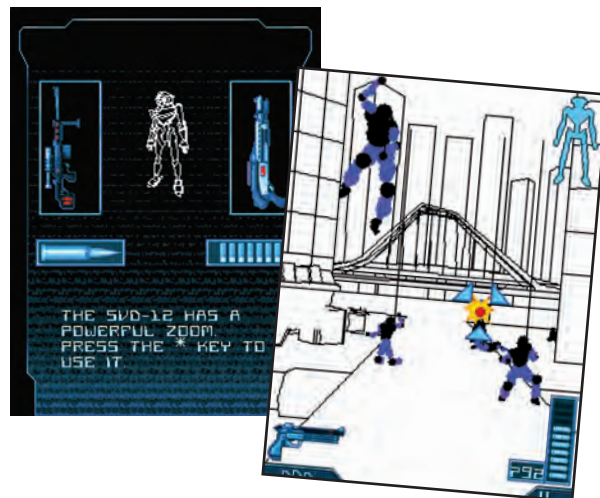
VIVENDI MOBILE HAS DECIDED that everyone should be able to play 3D games on their handsets – not just those who have handsets powerful enough to handle 3D games. To this end, they will shortly be releasing *Urban Attack*, a new first-person shooter that will be able to run on hundreds of different handsets, rather than just those that have the necessary graphical punch to manage true 3D games. By making use of vector graphics, the developers have opened the sphere of 3D games on mobile phones to a much wider audience.

The player takes the part of Yuri, a 17-year-old, highly-trained technology and Psi-ops expert working for the Russian Mafia in the USA. The year is 2046, and the setting is a post Third World War vision of the future.

But *Urban Attack* will do more than just allow many to experience 3D gaming on their

handsets. A reworking of the control systems, normally used in handset-based FPS titles, as well as a simple, effective aiming system, will make the game accessible to veteran gamers and casual newcomers to the genre.

"We wanted to develop a fast, well-paced, original mobile game that retains the look and feel of a more traditional shooter while being designed to function across hundreds of handsets, instead of a limited number of 3D devices," said Vincent Dondaine, producer of *Urban Attack*, Vivendi Games Mobile. "Players will enjoy the easy-to-use targeting system, which is so smooth it quickly becomes second nature. This title overcomes the typical challenges a game of this type for mobile presents, and we hope it proves to be a successful model for mobile games moving forward."



How well the vector-based graphics will be received remains to be seen, but the spirit of innovation that certain developers are following in this fast growing market is good to see. **NAG**

GENETICA

Developer→ Wireless Sharks | Publisher→ TBA | Genre→ Puzzle | Release→ TBA

ONE OF THE WONDERFUL aspects of mobile gaming is that it is an easy entrance into game development for indie developers. The games are small and relatively simple, after all, and the opportunities for those who need to establish themselves are many. Take Wireless Sharks for example... this Ukraine-based group has developed a new kind of puzzle game centred around genetic manipulation. Entitled *Genetica*, the game features 40 predefined levels across three game modes, as well as a random free mode.

By researching existing creatures and combining colourful molecules, the player will be able to invent new creatures while playing this puzzler. The game, because of its random mode, features almost limitless possibilities and a massive amount of replay value (as most puzzlers on mobile do).

When exactly *Genetica* will be available for download is not entirely certain as Mobile Sharks is still looking for a worldwide publisher. **NAG**



GOTHIC 3 – THE BEGINNING

Developer→ HandyGames | Publisher→ Jowood | Genre→ RPG | Release→ TBA

EARLY 2008 WILL SEE the release of the first mobile version of the popular *Gothic* universe. *Gothic 3: The Beginning* will enable players to experience Korinis and Tirth on their handsets, and will feature all the hallmarks of a computer role-playing game. A skill improvement and equipment improvement system will allow characters to develop as players fight and explore their way through what promises to be an interesting mobile game. The usual means of finding treasures (trading, fighting and down-right theft from all those mysterious chests that make RPGs great) will be available, as well as NPC dialogue

to help the player unravel the storyline. An autosave feature (a rarity in handheld titles) will also be included in the title.

Gothic 3: The Beginning is yet another in a rapidly-growing number of mobile-exclusive titles. The game will serve as a compliment to the already well-established *Gothic* franchise. **NAG**



IN WHAT OTHER JOB DO 50,000 PEOPLE SING YOUR NAME?

There is only one job where the glory is yours for the taking.
Whether that's transforming kids into superstars, making
your club a million overnight, or leading your team to victory.

There is only one job so rewarding, so challenging, so glorious.



THE GREATEST JOB ON EARTH

www.footballmanager.net



www.sigames.com



SEGA
www.sega.co.uk

© Sports Interactive Limited 2007. Published by SEGA Publishing Europe Limited. Developed by Sports Interactive Limited. SEGA and the SEGA logo are either registered trade marks or trade marks of SEGA Corporation. Football Manager, Sports Interactive and the Sports Interactive logo are either registered trade marks or trade marks of Sports Interactive Limited. All rights reserved.

REVIEWS

METAL SLUG M3

Publisher→ Vivendi | **Genre**→ Action platformer | **Reviewed on**→ Sony Ericsson k800i | **Rating**→ 77
Download→ SMS [NAG1204] to 083 123 686 | **RRP**→ R50

ONE OF THE GREAT things about mobile phone games is that arcade classics keep showing up on the platform. Take *Metal Slug M3*, for example. This game is a remake of the *Metal Slug* genre, which proved quite popular as a coin-operated game and even made an appearance or two on console a few years back. However, as sometimes happens with the conversion of well-known titles to the mobile format, *Metal Slug M3* is not a carbon copy of previous games – it is a new game.

As to be expected, *Metal Slug M3* is a side-scrolling action game, more like a platformer title than a shooter. This genre works particularly well on the mobile platformer, as the controls are generally quite uncomplicated. That's not the case here, though, and the controls get a little tricky. Although the game is responsive, certain

situations are a little difficult to handle, particularly if you have a small keypad (or big thumbs). The player could use a phone-based joystick to control the action, but this is one of the few games that is actually easier to play on the keypad.

The graphics is clear even on a smaller screen, which mitigates the control factor a little, and the sound, should you choose to make use of it, is thankfully sparse (very few sound effects and no tinny music mean that this isn't an embarrassingly loud game).

Several power-ups keep the game entertaining as you plough through tons of enemies in a number of different settings. The game features variable difficulty settings, which is something of a mercy when trying to get used to the controls.

If you enjoyed *Metal Slug* on other



platforms, don't mind a fair amount of frustration and are looking for a mobile action platformer with a familiar feel, *Metal Slug M3* is a good way to go. **NAG**

MIGHT AND MAGIC II

Publisher→ Gameloft | **Genre**→ Action Adventure | **Reviewed on**→ Sony Ericsson K800i | **Rating**→ 79
Download→ SMS [NAG1205] to 083 123 686 | **RRP**→ R50

IT MAY SEEM STRANGE to get an adventure title like this on the mobile platform, but the game works really well. It is reminiscent of similar titles presented on the *GameBoy*.

The basic idea is simple: the player's character travels the world, unravelling a mystery, collecting stuff and fighting bad guys... in other words, it's much like any other fantasy adventure title. It is also a fairly long game – most mobile games are short, but this title has a surprising amount of stuff to do, including side quests.

The isometric view makes playing the game simple (this kind of view just works better than others on mobile) and the controls are quick to learn.

Might and Magic II is a worthwhile title to play on the mobile, except for the fact that it doesn't offer the kind of replay value that one would hope for. **NAG**



MIDNIGHT HOLD'EM 3D

Publisher→ Gameloft | **Genre**→ Card game | **Reviewed on**→ Sony Ericsson k800i | **Rating**→ 78
Download→ SMS [NAG1206] to 083 123 686 | **RRP**→ R50

GAMELOFT'S MIDNIGHT HOLD'EM 3D is a good way to kill some time. The popularity of Hold'Em Poker grows daily, and this title allows an enthusiast to experience the game and even get a little practice.

3D games are relatively new to the mobile platform and, as a result, sometimes still have a few problems. This particular game is relatively problem free, although some of the animations and cut-scenes take up a lot of play time. There really isn't any such thing as a quick game of *Midnight Hold'Em 3D*.

As far as a poker sim goes, the game performs well. It makes sensible plays



and will even go as far as bluffing at times, making it a fairly realistic poker sim.

The best part of this game is the



fantastic replay value that it offers – you could play this one forever, due to the open-ended nature of the title. **NAG**

NAG

GET THE LATEST GAMING NEWS ON YOUR MOBILE.

HOW DO I GET IT?

SMS "MOBI NAG" to 36978 for a once-off fee of R5. No subscription charges for weekly updates, just minimal network data charges.

WILL MY PHONE WORK?

Your phone must have java and be GPRS enabled with a full color screen. Go to www.mobizines.co.za for more information and a list of compatible cell phones.

See the list below.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

A once off cost of R5 to send the sms and get the application.

GET IT NOW.

SMS "MOBI NAG" to 36978



THIS IS NOT A SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE!

NOKIA 3155i 3220 3230 3250 5300 5500 6020 6030 6061
6111 6126 6131 6170 6230 6230i 6233 6234 6235 6255 6260
6265 6267 6270 6280 6288 6300 6600 6620 6630 6670 6680
6681 7370 7390 7610 8800 E50 E60 E61 E61i E65 E70 N70
N71 N72 N73 N75 N76 N80 N90 N91 N92 N93 N93i N95 N95i

For a full list of compatible phones and other information go to www.mobizines.co.za

Get regular updates from South Africa's leading games magazine.

NOKIA

MOBIZINES

REVIEWS

ROCK 'N' BLOCKS

Publisher→ Vivendi | **Genre**→ Puzzle | **Reviewed on**→ Sony Ericsson K800i | **Rating**→ 90
Download→ SMS [NAG1207] to 083 123 686 | **RRP**→ R40

PUZZLE GAMES ARE CERTAINLY some of the best mobile games to play. Titles like *Tetris* and *Bejewelled* are perfect for mobile phones because they are relatively easy to get into, can be replayed almost endlessly and require little input from the user – they are basically what are referred to as “one-thumbers.” Because of their popularity on mobile, there are a great many to choose from. Whenever a market starts getting saturated in this way, originality is generally the first thing to go out the door. So, when a game like *Rock 'n' Blocks* comes along, it is something of a breath of fresh air in an otherwise stale market.

Rock 'n' Blocks follows the same basic principle as any other colour-matching game: match a certain number of blocks of the same colour to eliminate them. The big difference comes from the way that they

are matched. *Rock 'n' Blocks* features nine different game modes (a significant number for a mobile game), which present the player with various challenges. Sometimes the game is a normal top-down stacker, other times the blocks enter from two directions. Sometimes the blocks scroll sideways constantly, meaning that the player has to wait for groups to align themselves. Sometimes the blocks even rearrange themselves at random intervals.

The game is great fun and, despite a slightly more complex control system than other puzzlers, is easy to pick up and play. The whole thing has a rock music flavour, which means that, should sound be activated during playing, a number of rock songs have been reproduced... They're not fantastic quality, of course, but the sound on this game is some of the best you will get on the mobile platform.



Rock 'n' Blocks is a fantastic puzzler that will have a player playing for many months to come. It is a classic in the making, and will be a welcome entrant into the lists of “Best mobile puzzle games ever.” **NAG**

JEWEL QUEST 2

Publisher→ i-Play | **Genre**→ Action Adventure | **Reviewed on**→ Sony Ericsson K800i | **Rating**→ 80
Download→ SMS [NAG1208] to 083 123 686 | **RRP**→ R50

GAMES THAT DO WELL get cloned – it's a fact of the industry. If, however, the clones improve on the idea scalped from the original title, then it's a forgivable action. This is the case with *Jewel Quest 2* from i-Play. The game is “inspired by *Bejeweled*, (but takes things a touch further, improving on the dynamics of the previous title (which got a bit old quite quickly).

Jewel Quest 2 is all about matching similar pieces on a puzzle board by changing positions with other pieces. These boards change shape, and some puzzle pieces may need to be matched more than once to complete the board. Additionally, the whole thing is timed...

A story has been added to this one-thumb puzzler as well, but i-Play might as well not have bothered: the game is highly enjoyable even without it. Best of all, the game is surprisingly long and offers a high replay value, like most other puzzle titles do. **NAG**



REAL RUGBY

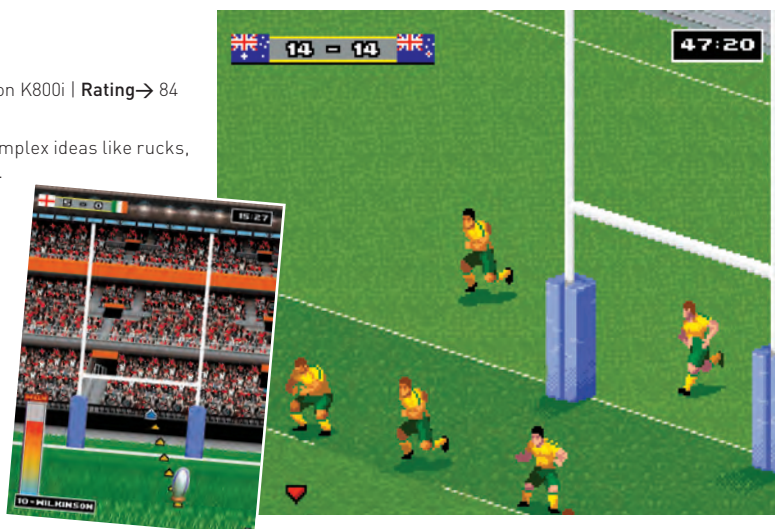
Publisher→ Gameloft | **Genre**→ Sports | **Reviewed on**→ Sony Ericsson K800i | **Rating**→ 84
Download→ SMS [NAG1209] to 083 123 686 | **RRP**→ R50

WHILE THE IDEA of a sports simulation seems a little strange when talking about mobile phone games, the Gameloft “Real” range performs exceptionally well. Take *Real Rugby*, for example. The game might not be a proper license (the names of the teams are slightly mangled, for example), but still delivers a surprisingly good and very enjoyable game of rugby right on the handset. *Real Rugby* features a number of modes and most of the teams that play the game in the real world.

Until the player is familiar with the controls things may get a little confusing, but the game makes up for that by offering prompts during play, particularly when

dealing with more complex ideas like rucks, mauls and throw-ins.

This game is surprisingly fun and can be played for a long time. There isn't really any such thing as a quick game of it, and its controls set it beyond the comfortable realms of one-thumb play, but it is great fun none the less. **NAG**



HARDWARE

SONY ERICSSON K800i

Supplier→ Sony Ericsson | RRP→ TBA



SPECS

SCREEN SIZE	240 x 320 pixels
COLOUR DEPTH	262,144 colour TFT
BATTERY STANDBY	350 hours
INTERNAL MEMORY	64MB
SIZE	105 x 47 x 22mm

WHEN IT COMES TO mobile phones, most people get swept along by the features without really looking at the practicality of the device. It's all fine and well having a great camera, but if the handset is difficult to use, there doesn't seem to be much point. Even when these aspects are taken into consideration, few extend the analysis to the idea of playing games on a phone.

The Sony Ericsson K800i isn't the newest phone around, but it does bear mentioning with regards to playing games. Along with having some very nice features (a built-in Sony Cyber-shot 3.2-megapixel camera is just the start) the device works well as a gaming platform. This is because of the fact that it is equipped with a large screen and a very versatile and easy-to-use joystick. Certain handsets have joysticks that are a little... finicky. Not so with this one. The joystick leaves no ambiguity in it's operation. You

are always sure which direction you are going in and a satisfyingly clear 'click' can be heard and felt when it is depressed.

On the downside (and this is something that most handsets suffer from), the keypad is fairly small. That's not a problem if you have small fingers, but most people would battle just a little, particularly when considering that the keys are not easy to distinguish by feel alone. A little practice should sort that out, though.

A great aspect of handsets that are not brand new is the fact that they support more games than new handsets. In this regard, the Sony Ericsson K800i is no slouch: most games have a version supported by this handy, versatile and powerful handset. If you plan to spend time gaming on your handset, this is a great option. It has powerful features, is well supported, and serves the user well as a phone as well as a gaming device. **NAG**

MOBILE



ASPHALT 3 STREET RACES



© 2006 Gameloft. All Rights Reserved. Gameloft, Gameloft logo, and Asphalt: Street Races are trademarks of Gameloft in the US and/or other countries. All manufacturers, cars, motorbikes, names, brands and associated imagery featured in this game are trademarks and/or copyrighted materials of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

SMS
NAG1203
to 083123686
R40



everywhere you go

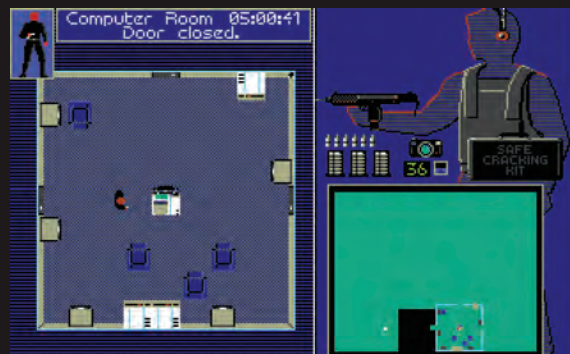
LOOKING BACK: COVERT ACTION

THE WORLD'S IN DANGER! Terror groups are planning something devious! The CIA needs you NOW! Okay, *Covert Action* isn't that exciting – at least not in presentation. However, there are people who feel that it is the best spy game ever developed. The saddest thing about it is that Sid Meier will probably never do a sequel. He even named a rule after his supposed folly: "The Covert Action Rule," which states that you should never bundle too many games into one package. He felt the action was weakly implemented in a mystery game.

Covert Action (1991), one of the early games from MicroProse (now spiritually Firaxis) offered great replay value because the stories were randomly generated. At the beginning, the CIA director tells you that something's up and gives you clues in the form of intercepted communications, mentioned locations and surveillance feedback. There's a movement in the grass and you're the guy sent to go check it out. Usually these briefs have a location or organisation tied to them. In more difficult modes, a sister organisation may be mentioned. From there, it becomes a hunt against time as you try to figure out what's up before the whole thing takes place. The missions usually follow an object, so for a theft you'd need a planner, thief, intermediary and a

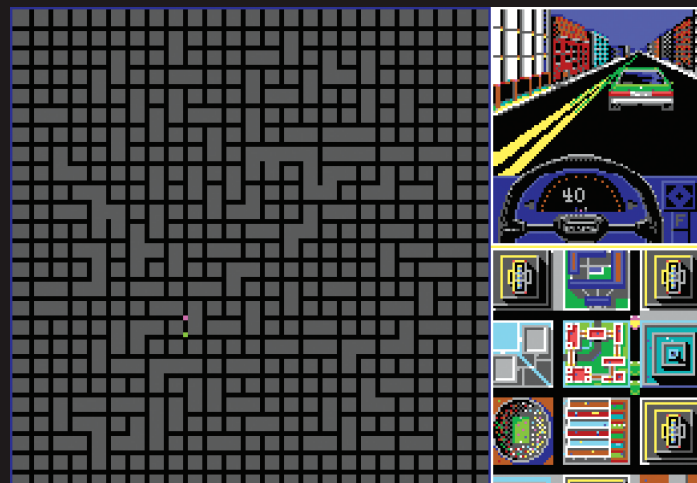
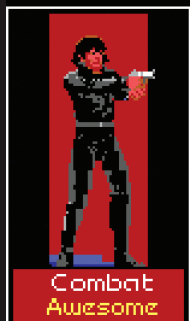
few others. At the top of this is a Mastermind, which also happens to be a mastermind for a specific politically anxious group with guns. To win the game, you have to nab all the masterminds, and to score points, you have to recover the object in question (it may even be a kidnapping or bomb) and arrest the participants. Getting all of them is tricky, since once you grab the one, the rest quickly disappears. The trick is to follow the plot as far as possible and then pinch as many as you can in quick succession. At least, that's what works for us, but we've yet to nab an entire gang. You usually get your man (or woman) – the elusive Mastermind – after a few missions.

To do this, you have to be good at a few things spies get up to. The simplest is anything with electronics. To tap a phone or track a car you have to play a mini game similar to *BioShock*'s hacking mini game. The game area looks like a circuit board with chips on the far right either being your targets or alarms. To succeed, you have to replace chips arranged on the rest of the board to divert currents to the targets and not the alarms – all before the time runs out. Terrorists blab and you can pick up at least something from their banter. The next step either involves tailing or breaking one of their locks. To tail, you have to watch a building and spot a



Preparation for Field Work

Combat training
Driving training
Cryptography training
Electronics training



suspect – if you've uncovered and identified his photo. That can be gained in many ways, but the best information gathering requires you to get your hands dirty.

Equipped with three types of grenades, an automatic motion sensor bug, Kevlar camera or safe cracking kit, you slip into the enemy headquarters. The game doesn't allow you to look like a one-man assault expo, so you can only carry a limited amount of items – enough to do your mission, but not to be a do-it-all. While inside, our spy (Max or Maxine) can check out safes and browse through files, snapping pics of the contents and planting bugs on plants, pictures and typewriters. You can also check every computer terminal, which will eventually give you a password that you can use to find somewhere nice – like an enemy group's cell or HQ location in another city. All these things can provide you with clues, though it becomes obvious when you've exhausted a

place's potential. The bugs will help what clues you get via interception, which the CIA monitors for you. You may also be breaking in to arrest someone or find something specific.

Eventually the clues will start giving you names, places and roles. Meier felt that the whole action sequence broke away from *Covert Action*'s appeal, but it really stimulated it. You went in there for a purpose and often you'd take care to avoid guards and go around without raising the alarm. The tailing game, which you played if you hadn't tracked someone electronically, was excellent since you had to keep making sure the guy didn't know he's being followed. Besides, the whole point of the exercise was to uncover as much as possible so that you could get to the action scenarios. Sure, perhaps it could've done with hanging around at polo lounges and casinos chatting to *femmes fatales*. Nevertheless, Sid is wrong and *Covert Action* was seriously fun spy stuff. **NAG**

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER®

ANNIVERSARY™



UNLOCK THE PAST.
UNLEASH THE UNKNOWN.



PlayStation 2

Wii

XBOX 360
XBOX LIVE

PSP

Games
for Windows

eidos

Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Anniversary © 2007 Eidos Interactive Ltd. Developed by Crystal Dynamics Inc. Published by Eidos Interactive Ltd. Crystal Dynamics is a trademark of Crystal Dynamics Inc. Eidos and the Eidos logo are trademarks of the Eidos Group of Companies. All rights reserved. "PS2", "PlayStation" and "PSP" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Microsoft Games Studio logo, and the Games for Windows logo are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries.

NAME THE GAMES AND WIN A PRIZE FROM MEGAROM!

megarom
interactive

WIN THIS!

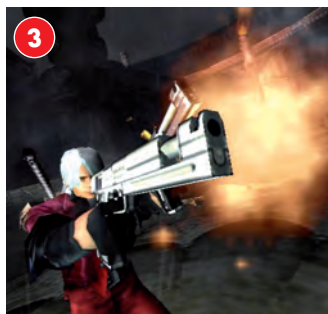
NAME THE GAMES AND win! You don't need to know them all, but if you know the most you could win a copy of Assassin's Creed for the Xbox 360 courtesy of Megarom. E-mail your answers (with the subject line **Name That Game** November to avoid being eaten by spam filters) to nagcomps@tidemedia.co.za, and be sure to include your name, phone number and postal address. Congratulations to our September winner, Le Roi Beukes, who won a copy of *The Witcher*!



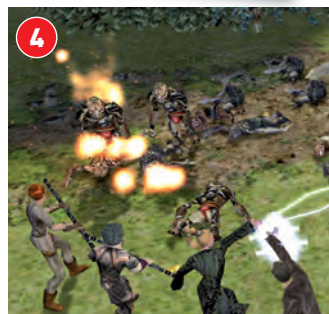
_ A _ _ _ _ _ T _ _ _



_ _ _ _ _ H _ _ _ D _ _ _ _ _



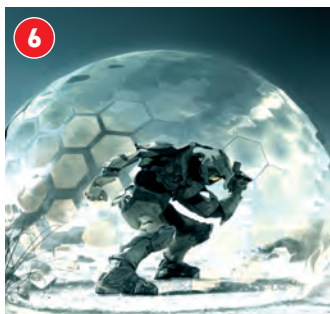
_ _ _ _ _ I _ _ _ _ _ R _ _ _



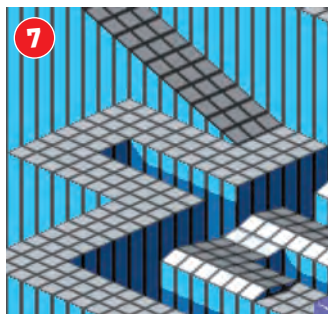
_ _ _ U _ _ _ _ _ E _ _ _



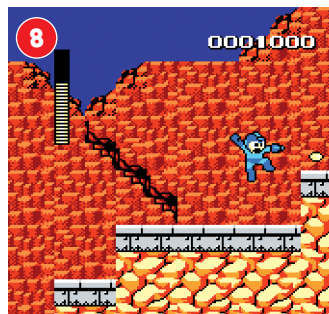
_ _ _ A _ _ _ _ _



_ _ _ _ _ O _ _ _



_ _ _ _ _ R _ _ _ _ _ S _ _ _



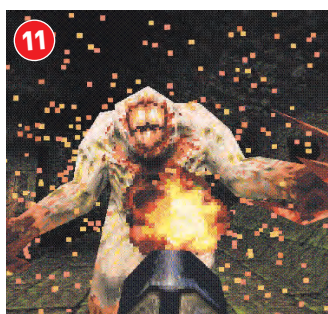
_ _ _ _ _ G _ _ _ _ _



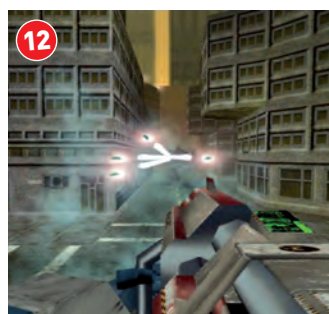
_ _ _ W _ _ _ _ _ Z _ _ _ _ _ O _ _ _



_ _ _ _ _ F _ _ _ A _ _ _



_ _ _ _ _ K _ _ _



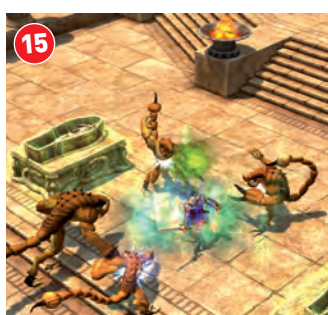
_ _ _ _ _ G _ _ _



_ _ _ T _ _ _ _ _



_ _ _ A _ _ _ _ _ R _ _ _ _ _



_ _ _ I _ _ _ _ _ F _ _ _



_ _ _ X _ _ _ _ _ U _ _ _

LAST MONTH'S GAMES: 1. Assassin's Creed; 2. Ballance; 3. Beyond Good and Evil; 4. BioShock; 5. Crysis; 6. Doom 3; 7. Geometry Wars; 8. King Kong; 9. Lair; 10. Pac-Man; 11. Prince of Persia LIVE; 12. Project Gotham Racing 3; 13. Psychonauts; 14. Rayman Raving Rabbids; 15. Sacred; 16. Supreme Commander

WIN

SMSes charged at R2 each | Competition closes 1 December 2007 | Winners will be notified by phone



2 X LEGENDARY EDITION HALO 3 XBOX GAMES + BAG HAMPERS

Set includes the following:

- A copy of Halo 3 in a collectible Spartan Helmet case;
- Remastered cinematic material from Halo: Combat Evolved and Halo 2 with developer commentary;
- "A day in the life of Bungie" featurette
- Featurettes on game design, development and more;
- Early game concept and their evolution over the course of Halo 3's development;
- Audio-video calibration tool custom designed by the Halo 3 graphics and audio team;
- Exclusive content from the creative minds of Machinima artists Red vs. Blue and This Spartan Life;
- Illuminating "Halo 3" storyboard art book from artist Lee Wilson.



Prizes sponsored by



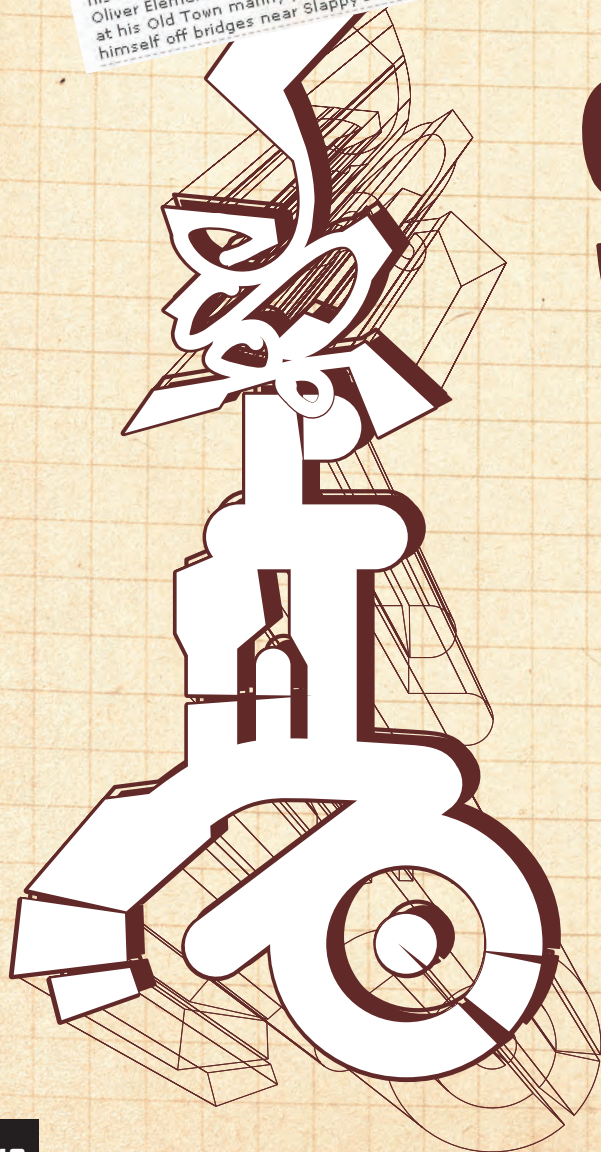
SWEET

San Vanelona

San Vanelona
Population: Unknown (and 20-30 security guards).
Elevation: Sea Level to 1,800'
Climate: 24 hours of sunshine, 365 days/year.
Total area: big... really, really big.

Famous residents: Some well-known skaters and their San Van haunts include **John Rattray** hucking at his Mega-compound, **Mike Carroll** filming lines at Oliver Elementary, **Jason Dill** working out the kinks at his Old Town manny pad, and **Ali Boulala** flinging himself off bridges near Slappy's Skateshop.

"SKATE" SPOTS



IT'S AS IF SOME cosmic being decided to build an entire city dedicated to the joyful bliss of a nice skateboarding session. San Vanelona is a skateboarding dream come true: four locations each with its own distinct style and structure. The Suburbs are a homecoming, punctuated by idyllic lawns, a well-loved Community Center and a few surprises if you know which backyards to explore. The Rez is the bombshell between the Suburbs and Downtown; a steep winding locale filled with sick grind spots all the way down. Carved out of glass and marble, Downtown may be dangerous to skate with all the security guards around, but that only makes the lines there all the more worthwhile. Finally, there's Old Town - nearly European in architecture and filled with gaps, ramps, leaps and a long bomb of a storm drain that shoots you out at the Plan B skate warehouse. There's a lot more to San Vanelona, such as the X-Games and the mysterious Mansion (not to mention the DIY park with its buttery verts and fun boxes), but exploring is half the fun. Here are a few sweet skate spots to get you started on your tour of San Vanelona.

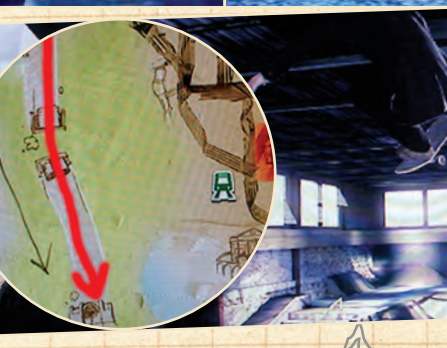
SUBURBS

The Community Center is a great place to skate, but if you're tired of pushing yourself around everywhere, nothing beats skating in

a pool. If you take the subway to the Vanelona Heights station (the southern station of the Suburbs), head north out of the station (which on it's own is a sick skating area with some smooth wall-rides and ramps) and across the street. Head left up the sidewalk and go right at the corner. Keep right, and you'll see a break in the trees that leads to a set of long ramps and rails that head down towards a pool. You can try and jump from the top of the ramp, but you probably won't make it. Skating in the pool is a blast and there's always music playing: the difference between the shallow and deep ends of the pool can be used for some slick transitions if you angle it just right.

THE REZ

There are two great spots to skate at The Rez, namely The Hill and the Art Gallery. The Hill ends in a steep ramp called "The Bomb," which you can own if you manage to transition from one side over the stairs to the other. It's tricky, so be sure to set your Session Marker at the top of the hill. To get to The Hill, head to the eastern Suburb station (Gordondale Plateau), exit the station and follow the road left. Take the first left and head down the road. You'll see a sign up ahead for The Rez (keep an eye out for the cement pipe lying there). Try grinding the long curb from the



top of The Hill, or even better, see if you can manual from the cement pipe all the way down to The Bomb. We don't recommend doing a front-side manual - they get hard to control at high speeds... and you will be going at a very high speed.

The Art Gallery is dead easy to get to. Just take the subway to the Art Gallery station and it's in front of you when you exit the station. There's lots to do at the Art Gallery, like surviving the Loop de Loop sculpture and hitting some of the gaps. All around the Art Gallery there are other good skating locations, and there's a skate shop nearby. The bushes around the transfers may give you some trouble since you can't see if anyone is on the other side - try not to kill anyone by kick-flipping your board into their face.

DOWNTOWN

There is no way to describe just how many skating spots are around the Downtown area, but avoid the Marble Park; it's not that great. It looks all shiny and is a little difficult to get

into (you have to go around the block from the station), but inside there just isn't that much to do except if you're into some wavy flatland tricking.

Instead, take the subway to the Downtown station (south of Downtown) and head straight up the hill from the exit - you'll see a large tower in the distance. That's the Matrix Plaza and you can totally be the 'one' on those smooth marble walkways. There is even a giant vert ramp that's tricky to skate but worth the effort if you're into lip tricks and high-air exits. The pipe is near the south end of the Matrix Plaza, to the right of the main bowl under the earth statue.

If you were looking for it, the X-Games arena is at the Downtown station - you can't miss it.

OLD TOWN

Playing host to two of the sickest locations in the game, Old Town is cobbled heaven for rails, transfers and huge airs. Parts of Old Town are as steep as The Hill, but divided by roads you'll have to bomb

through (try not to get run over). To get to the storm drains that lead down to Plan B's warehouse skate park, head to the City Hall Plaza station, which is at the northern part of Old Town. Head straight across the plaza from the station exit; make a right at the road, and when you spot breaks in the left wall, that's the drop into the storm drains. Watch out for that drop; it's high and you might not hit the ramp right going down - you'll kill yourself. The storm drains are a blast; huge pipes broken up by nice gap and grind interludes. You can actually go full 360 inside the pipes if you have enough speed, and it's good fun to do a Coffin going down. Try doing a Coffin backwards (fakie). Right at the end of the storm drain is a huge ramp that gaps you over right into the warehouse.

The entrance to the Plan B Warehouse is on the left side from where you landed. The inside is filled with a verts, transfers, rails, a quarter-bowl at the vert, as well as copious fun boxes for some tech lines. **NAG**

OVERCLOCK 103

LAST MONTH WE DEALT with overclocking RAM on an Intel platform and how it all worked from a memory bandwidth perspective. This month, we'll delve into the actual tweaking of the memory timings and frequencies – first on an AMD platform, then on an Intel platform.

While it generally works the same way on both 939 and AM2 platforms, we'll concentrate on the AM2 platform as it delivers the maximum bandwidth even though not necessarily the highest efficiency. That honour goes to the 939 systems, especially those based on the NVIDIA nForce4 chipset.

As a result of the AMD chips housing an internal 128-bit memory controller, the memory bandwidth is heavily influenced by the clock speed of the CPU – even for the same HT speed and memory speed with exactly the same timings. The difference as measured in synthetic tests can be anything from 2GB/sec to 3GB/sec and sometimes even more. Therefore, it will always be important to keep clock speeds as high as possible (obviously not at the cost of reducing memory speeds to ridiculous levels).

The first thing that one would want to do on an AM2 platform is to decrease the HT link multiplier in the BIOS from the default 5x to 3x (or sometimes even to 2x). This has no performance penalty and will not affect the memory bandwidth recorded because the CPU has direct access to the memory and doesn't go through the HyperTransport link. For argument's sake, let's assume you have an Athlon X2 CPU that has a 13x multiplier, which results in a stock clock speed of 2.6GHz (13 x 200). Let's take for instance the AthlonFX-62, which happens to operate at such a frequency.

Now, because of the way the AM2 Athlon 64 works, with any odd multiplier, the

memory speed you get is less than what you actually set. That is with DDR2 800 RAM with such a CPU: the memory speed is actually 375MHz and not 400MHz (SDR rates) as one would expect. To fix this, one should only make use of even number multipliers. In addition, when making use of even number multipliers it is important to note that overclocking of the HT bus by even 1MHz will result in the memory speed going up by 4MHz. So on an HT bus set at 250MHz, the memory speed, even though set to 800 in the BIOS, is 1,000MHz. This must be always watched especially when making use of a 1T command rate as most RAM is unlikely to be able to tolerate 1T at 1GHz even at relaxed timings.

Therefore, once you have sorted out your frequencies regarding RAM and HT speeds, you must now find out where the exact

Once you have sorted out your frequencies regarding RAM and HT speeds, you must now find out where the exact balance is between frequency and tight timings.



balance is between frequency and tight timings, but also keep in mind that you want more than the reference clock speed of the CPU, which is 2.6GHz. On our chosen CPU, we would have to drop the multiplier to 10x and not 12x when using high-speed RAM rated at 1,066MHz or higher. This will allow us to run an HT bus speed of 260MHz, a clock speed of 2.6GHz and a memory speed of 1,040MHz. In theory, this should allow for a maximum of 16.6GB/sec. However, we are not going to get anywhere near that efficiency, but are likely to end up at about 61-64% efficiency for 5-5-5-15 2T timings, which is around the 10GB/sec mark. This is pretty good and will yield positive results in synthetic tests, be they CPU bound or GPU bound. To increase the efficiency we would have to either decrease the latency to 4-4-4-12 or increase the CPU speed to 3.64GHz, which is not likely to happen, so your only option is the timings.

Next time, we'll delve into even more detail about the AM2 platform and its tweaking options. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

**I AM RIPPER.
TEARER.
SLASHER.
TEETH IN THE
DARKNESS.
I AM BEOWULF!**

BEOWULF™

The Game



Battle fierce enemies as you play through 30 years of Beowulf's life not seen in the movie.



Unleash Carnal Power and fight hand-to-hand combat with giant monsters.



Lead your men into battle and become a hero king.

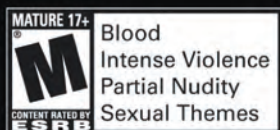
COMING NOVEMBER 2007

BEOWULFGAME.COM



Coming soon for the PLAYSTATION®3 computer entertainment system and PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system

megarom
www.megarom.co.za
Tel: +27 11 361 4800
sales@megarom.co.za



TM Paramount Pictures. © 2007 Paramount Pictures and Shangri-La Entertainment, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Game Software © 2007 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", "PS" Family logo and "PSP" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. PSP® system - Memory Stick Duo™ may be required (sold separately). Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies. Software platform logo (TM) and © EMA 2006.

UBISOFT



GROUND ZERO

by Toby Hudson

OPTERON IS NOT FOR GAMING!

YUP, YOU HEARD IT right, straight from the guys in charge of AMD in this country! So all you guys at the LAN with Opteron 165s need to go home now. I'm sure this news will upset many including my husband, who as games editor of *NAG* is required to play many games but unfortunately has my old Opteron 165 in his home machine.

Before this gets out of hand, I should explain. First, let me say that I like AMD. This column isn't to bash their products. I've had many over the years, and I plan to have many more. They still have some great stuff, like the HD 2900 Pro reviewed in this issue. This is about their treatment of the press.

At *rAge*, AMD held a press conference. This is where the title quote comes from, as it was among a list of excuses why we haven't gotten a Barcelona (AMD's upcoming quad core) to test yet. If it had come from some PR person, I might have ignored it. I can't criticise a PR person for not knowing what a Barcelona core is or what Quad FX is since that's not their job. But the head of AMD's SA office?

For a long time, AMD did not have a local office. They were managed from afar, which led to exasperating delays in getting new products to review (Quad FX won't sell in your country! It's just on all the distributor pricelists). The new office was supposed to fix this. However, it seems to have made things worse. Now I'm faced with the dilemma of whether the people telling me things like "Opteron is not for gaming!" actually believe that, or if they just assume I'm some kind of moron. Before that gets me angry letters, let me add that the rest of this exchange included things like "They're entirely different types of CPUs!" and "For gaming you need an Athlon FX!" and "We've never supported gaming on Opteron!" (At Opteron's launch the main 64-bit app shown was *Unreal Tournament*.) Despite my attempts to explain that CPU core codenames are pretty clear and since they all execute x86 instructions, it's irrelevant, they stuck to this line. Of course, AnandTech got eight of them to keep, but AMD SA told me that those had been stolen from motherboard manufacturers. This has happened before with one or two samples. But an entire OEM tray of eight CPUs when one would do the job? Come on guys, you can't expect me to believe that!

Also, when Neo and I pointed out a typo on the slides at this AMD event, they didn't just go "oops!" and laugh it off. No, they tried to tell me that I didn't know what I was talking about. The typo was a

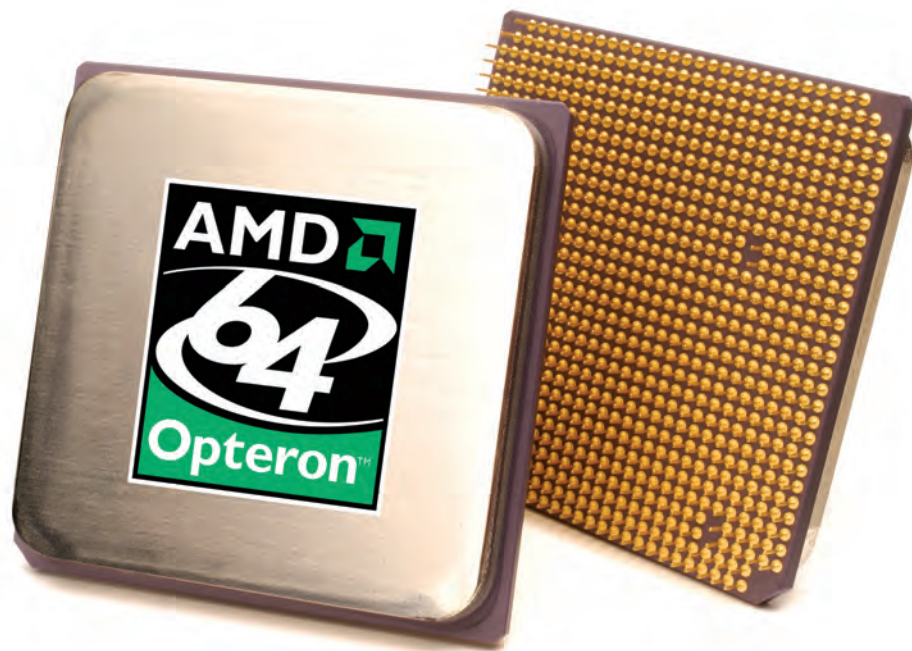
600MHz core for the 2900 XT. This is correct for the 2900 Pro, which was also on the same slide, but the 2900 XT has been 740MHz from day one. The AMD guys tried to tell me that "OEMs clock their cards differently!" which has no bearing on what AMD stated in their slides, in their previous media, on their Website, and what we ran in print based on info they gave us months ago.

Speaking of which, the session started off with the AMD Europe guy asking things like "Who's heard of UVD?" as if we're some complete backwater. Now, I like to think I'm a professional, and part of that means knowing what the hell I'm talking about. I expect to deal with other professionals who should at least have the courtesy to read the *SACM* feature I wrote on their product. I could forgive them if it was a little news piece buried somewhere, but we gave them a cover and it's obvious that this guy never even bothered to read anything the press in this country has written.

The real kicker though was when it was implied that AMD didn't just drop Socket 939 like a hot potato, but it "just seemed that way in South Africa." Even though I was in the US for much of S939's lifespan and the people who complained about it to me were US friends, it was dismissed as the local market not getting products until years after everyone else.

This isn't exclusively an AMD phenomenon. Let me splash a little of this on Sapphire, who told me the 2900 Pro isn't available, and then when I came back with photos of GeCube cards (one reviewed in this issue) on sale for R2,699 at the show you had to walk through to get to this press event, it was dismissed with some mutterings about "small volume manufacturers" despite the fact that most online 2900 Pro reviews so far used Sapphire cards. They also recently told us "The 2600X2 isn't really a high-end gaming part, it's more for people who want lots of monitors," despite Sapphire making a huge deal about sponsoring them in all the WCG competition machines the same week.

Please guys. Everyone has good and bad products and on and off days/quarters/years. However, don't insult my intelligence. Some of us do browse the Web and contradicting yourselves makes it look like you're trying to pull one over on us. I'm sure some people remember what happened last time a company tried that on me back in the *CustomPC* SA days. At least Intel had the balls to say, "We screwed up with the Pentium 4," and we saw how they came back from that. **NAG**



Everyone has good and bad products and on and off days/quarters/years. However, don't insult my intelligence. Some of us do browse the Web and contradicting yourselves makes it look like you're trying to pull one over on us.



CRYSIS

COMING SOON

www.ea.co.za





HARDWIRED

by Neo Sibeko

DIRECT-X

I T'LL SOON BE A year since Windows Vista was released. It will be no secret to anybody that it has received a less than a warm reception. This is because of a number of reasons. For gamers, the performance of the operating system is still a little behind that of Windows XP. There are reasons for this, but the bottom line is that it's still behind.

Besides the operating system, what we are concerned with is the DirectX 10 API and the graphics cards, which many have bought simply because of the promise of stunning visuals and magnificent speed. This, however, can only happen if the games are designed in such a way as to take advantage of the new API.

There are a few things that prevent this from happening presently and they all have nothing to do with the API as such, but the developers as always.

If as a developer you wanted to reach as large an audience as possible, you'd most likely want your game to not be tied to Vista. As result, you can't target DirectX 10 systems exclusively, which means whatever DX10 implementation you have will be complementary to the underlying DirectX 9 targeted engine. This is the situation we then find ourselves in and this trend could carry on for some time, or at least until developers feel that there are enough DirectX 10-enabled systems to not influence their sales negatively.

That puts us, the end-users, in a difficult position, because it is next to impossible to see the real benefit of DirectX 10 as everything we can currently play and do is patched, which is no good at all. This is unfortunate because for as long as this is happening, we will never reap the real benefits of our investments. As disturbing as it is to think about, chances are that your pride and joy GeForce 8800 or Radeon

HD 2900 card is unlikely to ever play any DirectX 10-native titles in its lifetime. This is because by the time that we receive such games, the graphics cards will be several revisions or even a full generation ahead of where these cards are today.

That is a sad reality and there is no simple way to speed up the adoption process of the API, even though it has to happen sooner rather than later.

That brings us to another point worth mentioning. No single game or benchmark is a representation of any API. This has always been true for every DirectX version and it is no different now with DirectX 10. If all developers were equal, then we could argue that Hellgate: London, for instance, is the best DirectX 10 has to offer. However, that is not the case. It is one game and its look and style are squarely a result of the creativity, or lack thereof, of the development team and not the API. We must realise that the new API is as good as the team using it. By itself it cannot create magical graphical effects - after all, it's a tool and not a product.

We as the end-users should not look to any single game as anything other than what it is. At best, we should compare the implementation of the API between developers and not necessarily compare the API with its former versions, as there is no comparison there. DirectX 10 is the best graphics API we have ever had on the PC.

If we want to, we may look at this like we view consoles. The first few titles that arrive with any console don't make the best use of the system, but during the console's life, the graphics quality increases dramatically as developers grow accustomed to the system. The same principle applies to DirectX 10. **NAG**

“ If as a developer you wanted to reach as large an audience as possible, you'd most likely want your game to not be tied to Vista. As result, you can't target DirectX 10 systems exclusively. ”



CRYSIS



Available Soon
R349⁹⁹
(Exclusive to PC)

Look & Listen
For the Fans - NAG's preferred gaming retailer.

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

GAUTENG - Fourways: 011 467 1115 • Cresta: 011 476 4142 • Hyde Park: 011 325 4237 • East Rand: 011 823 3642 • Irene: **Now Open**
Clearwater: 011 675 3648 • Lenasia: 011 852 3231 • Atterbury: 012 991 6626 • Menlyn: 012 368 1080 • Greenstone: 011 524 0049
Soweto (Maponya Mall): 011 938 4091 **Now Open** • LIMPOPO - Tzaneen: 015 307 4371 **Now Open** • **DURBAN** - Pavilion: 031 265 1600
NORTH WEST - Rustenburg: 014 537 3466 • **MPUMALANGA** - Nelspruit: 013 752 4524 • Witbank: 013 692 4530 **Now Open**
FREE STATE - Bloemfontein: 051 430 0313 **Now Open** • **WESTERN CAPE** - Cavendish: 021 683 1810 • Century City: 021 551 4647
Willowbridge: 021 914 0760 • Worcester: 023 342 1502

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za. Open 'til 10.30pm, 7 days a week.

While stocks last. E&OE. Prices and availability subject to change at the discretion of the supplier.



BEHIND THE GAME CONSOLE GPUS

WITH CONSOLES GETTING MORE advanced with each generation, the similarities between graphics processors in PCs, open box systems and consoles are becoming less and less. In fact, current-generation consoles like the Xbox 360, PS3, and to some extent the Wii, have a variation of what was once a discreet graphics card in PCs, obviously with a few modifications that are required for the environment within which they are operating.

In the next few pages, we have detailed the graphics synthesizers and processors that have their roots in the PC. It may be a surprise to some, but the earliest example of this was in the nineties in the form of the SEGA Dreamcast.

SEGA DREAMCAST (27 NOVEMBER 27 1998)

Introduced as the first second-generation console at least a year before the rival and ultimate winner, the PlayStation 2, the Dreamcast was ahead of its time as far as the graphics synthesizer was concerned. Sporting a graphics processor by PowerVR, the Dreamcast could do what cutting-edge, discreet graphics cards in open platforms such as the PC could. It would be at least three years before another console (the Xbox) would make use of a PC-based graphics chip as its main rendering engine.

The Dreamcast remains unique even up to this day as it was the only console to make use of a tile-based rendering chip. With that, it inherited all the benefits of such a rendering mechanism. How the PowerVR2 or CLX2 (as it came to be known in its console guise) worked was by making use of small 32 x 32 pixel tiles. These small tiles were then 'sewn' together when the complete frame had been rendered and ready for display in the frame buffer. This type of rendering was very efficient and still remains so today, because it needs no Z-buffer and is almost impervious to depth complexity problems. This rendering mechanism is interesting because not only was it the only 'sort-first' (the stage at which screen positioning and placement of objects is determined) rendering system, but was, as mentioned earlier, the only graphics processor to not suffer from overdraw.

This resulted in a very efficient processor even though its specs would seem to indicate otherwise. Deferred rendering was at a hardware level instead of being dependent on the API or game. Since rendering was done to an internal frame buffer per tile (on-die registers stored the tile information), the fill rate was incredibly high. With no texture

fetches done until at the very end on the actual frame buffer, it was possible to sort the scene (hidden surface removal and polygon rejection on tiles that are out of screen space) and textures at the same time, making it a very parallel system with little or no dependencies on other parts of the processor.

Coincidentally, when the Dreamcast was designed there was a time when the 3Dfx Voodoo2 was to be the graphics synthesizer of choice. However, in the end, the PowerVR2 chip won, which was a blessing in disguise for many reasons. Because of SEGA having chosen the CLX2, the Dreamcast at the time provided incredible visuals that matched those of PCs and sometimes delivered visuals not quite achievable on PCs. *Shenmue* was one title that showed the console's abilities. The flexibility and muscle of the CLX2 were not only obvious to those who were fortunate enough to see it in action, but also to Capcom, which was looking for a system to replace the ageing CPS2 arcade platform and found the

answer in the Dreamcast. It was "Naomi" that eventually powered the CPS3.

The SEGA Dreamcast was the first console to turn to the PC looking for a capable graphics synthesizer. This is where all consoles would end up anyway. Unfortunately, although the Dreamcast was ahead of its time, it fell behind by the time the other consoles started appearing.

MICROSOFT XBOX (15 NOVEMBER 2001)

If any console proved that the power of a console wasn't necessarily in its specific hardware makeup, but the sum of all the parts, it would be the Xbox. Whether it was a commercial success or not is not the point here. What we are interested in is in how it managed to be the most capable console in tangible terms compared to Sony's PS2 and eventually Nintendo's GameCube.

Sporting an Intel Pentium III 733MHz processor, a Northbridge and graphics





processor by NVIDIA, and a Windows 2000-based operating system with a custom DirectX 8-like API, the Xbox was by all means a PC. However, it behaved very differently because of the software that was running on the system.

Selecting the NVIDIA NV20/NV25-based graphics processor for the Xbox was, at the time, a smart move by Microsoft, because this GPU was built to target an API that was designed by the company itself. It was therefore quite easy to extract maximum performance from the unit. The NV2A itself was somewhere between the NV20 (GeForce 3) and the NV25 (GeForce 4) in that it had the same basic layout of four pixel processors, each with two texturing units making for a maximum eight textures per pass, but only four pixels per cycle. The NV2A also featured four render outputs and double the vertex engines found in the NV20, making it similar to the NV25 but lacking in the memory bandwidth department. This was not so much of an issue, as there are defined and specific rendering targets depending on the display system, so massive amounts of bandwidth or its management is not as crucial as it would be on a PC.

The NV2A also featured a particle effects engine that was not present or accessible in the NV20, but fully exposed in the NV25, accelerating effects such as smoke, fire, and fog. Unlike on the PC, these effects could be put to use quite easily. Once again, because of the closed box environment, determining performance was quite easy for the developer, and once an acceptable framerate had been achieved, it would likely stay as such on every single Xbox console.

The significance of the NV2A cannot be understated, because as far as the feature set is concerned, it's similar to what Microsoft has today with ATI and the Xenos processor. By combining features of an upcoming PC part and proved previous-generation hardware, the graphics processor was able to extract maximum benefit from the development tools on the software side and superior performance at the hardware level.

As the first console to feature pixel and vertex shaders, the Xbox, or more specifically the NV2A, was far ahead of the competition at the time. Not only was the processor faster

and programmable, but it had better tools than the competition had. Up until the Xenos in 2005, this was the first and only unit to provide and make available pixel programs to the console market.

SONY PLAYSTATION 2 (4 MARCH 2000)

This console was and still is the best-selling console ever and could be what changed how consoles were perceived forever.

The strangest aspect of this console is that it was built from the ground up to be a gaming machine and nothing else. That is, every little bit of silicon in the machine is dedicated to either dealing with audio or graphics. However, since we are only interested in the graphics part of the console, it must be said that the Emotion engine has no real PC equivalent at all. While the other consoles here have some resemblance to a previously existing PC GPU or graphics synthesizer, the Emotion engine is a completely different core based on an advanced MIPS3 ISA superscalar core. The engine features a 128-bit memory controller, two vector units and a graphics interface unit, all working together to deliver the visuals of the console. The system in theory could deliver an incredible amount of power at the time. However, the lack of a dedicated transform unit made it less flexible than the other units, but still very powerful.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE AND WII (19 NOVEMBER 2006)

The GameCube was the least powerful console in the previous generation.

The "Flipper" processor from ATI was closer to the PS2's Emotion engine than it

was to the NV2A. Even then, however, it was still dwarfed by a considerable margin.

Details on the Flipper chip were never revealed in all their glory to the public.

However, from the supported features and the few technical specifications, one would have to assume that the Flipper was based on the ATI Radeon GPU.

The Flipper processor featured a DirectX 8, OpenGL 1.3 graphics part from 2001, based on the R200 core from ATI. The Flipper, unlike any other graphics processor, was also in charge of I/O operations and audio, so the silicon actually dedicated to graphics processing was even less than that of the competing products. For instance, while the Flipper supported pixel programs of sorts, the complexity of these programs could not be such that they would bring the system to a grinding halt, and as a result they went largely unused for complex shading and the like. What was possibly leveraged, however, were the vertex processing abilities, which were simpler and less costly than other programmable effects. The least visually impressive console of the time was still superior to any other console before it - possibly better than the Dreamcast from years earlier. The Wii, on the other hand,





years earlier. The Wii, on the other hand, has a tweaked and higher clocked Flipper chip renamed "Hollywood." Details on this chip are sketchy at best, but it is an improved version of the previous-generation chip.

MICROSOFT XBOX 360 (22 NOVEMBER 2005)

If you're a fan or not, there is no denying that the Xbox 360 has the most advanced graphics processor of any console available today. The closest to it is its direct and probably biggest competitor, the Sony PS3. The Xenos, however, pips the RSX in a number of ways. Probably the most significant thing about the Xenos is that it's a hybrid DirectX 9.0c/DirectX 10 graphics processor. Indeed, it leans more towards the earlier API. However, it makes use of an impressive 48 unified shaders, which results in it being peerless in features and raw performance numbers. Once again, that is due to it being based partly on ATI's R580 core, but integrating some technologies that would eventually find themselves in the DX10.1 R600 core.

As with the original Xbox, Microsoft has leveraged the power of a previously available

graphics processor and combined it with one that was in the pipeline, featuring several key advantages over the predecessor. The Xenos was the first unified shader rendering processor on any platform, making it incredibly efficient but also capable beyond anything else available at the time of release. Featuring a secondary 10MB of EDRAM, the Xenos is able to deliver overwhelming bandwidth between the primary graphics core and the EDRAM. To put this into perspective, imagine two AMD/ATI HD 2900 XT cards with their 512-bit bus paired for a theoretical 1,024-bit memory width. The Xenos exceeds this by delivering 256GB/sec between the two units, making bandwidth a non-issue for the console.

The Xenos, much like the NV2A, supports antialiasing, although this time has a far better implementation and the cost in performance is nowhere near that experienced on the original Xbox. Developers can either enable 4 x AA or 2 x AA depending on the resolution that the system is rendering too. On standard definition displays, 4 x AA is available and has little to no cost in performance. When the resolution scales

to 720p, the maximum AA sample that can be used is 2x and no antialiasing is possible when rendering to a 1080 display. This is a direct result of the 10MB EDRAM, as the back- and front-facing buffer need to be able to fit in the EDRAM.

A sensible approach by Microsoft and AMD/ATI is that with increasing pixel granularity, the need for AA is diminished, so the performance and visual quality can stay the same no matter the targeted screen size. Some developers have been brilliant in working around the frame buffer limitation and actually using it to their advantage by using a deferred rendering technique where a small aspect ratio correction screen is drawn. This would then have 4 x AA applied to it, with the resolved result then fitted over the 720p resolution for instance. This in essence enables 4 x AA on a higher than supported resolution, but without the performance penalty that would be associated with exceeding the frame buffer limitations of the EDRAM.

This flexibility is among the few things that make the Xenos the most versatile and easily the most powerful graphics processor available on any console to date.

SONY PLAYSTATION 3 (11 NOVEMBER 2006)

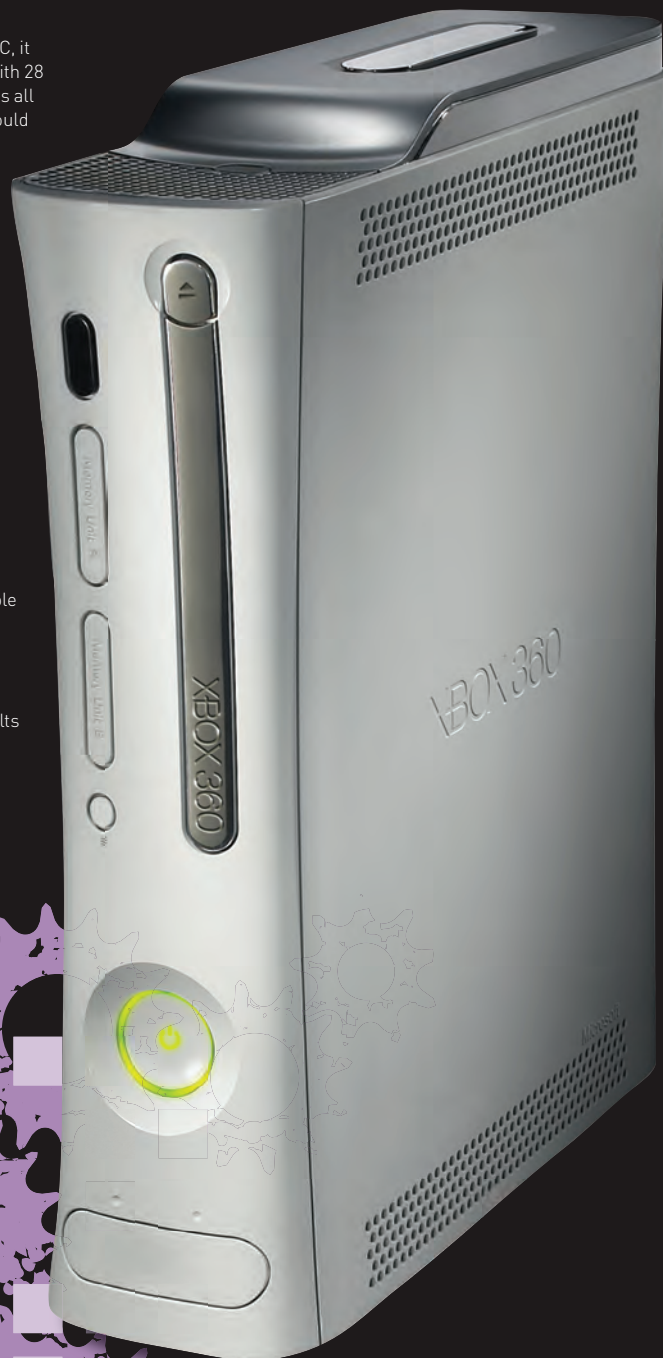
Sony, with its shiny black Blu-ray playing behemoth, has managed to fit one of the most powerful CPUs ever developed and in some ways a super computer into a games console. No matter how anybody slices it, the Cell CPU is impressive, not only as an engineering feat, but in terms of raw performance. There is no denying that because of the Cell processor, the PS3 can claim to be the most powerful gaming console ever made. However, despite the Cell processor and its incredible power, the PS3 wouldn't be able to shift as many polygons on screen wasn't it for its dedicated RSX GPU. The RSX was built for massive amounts of shaded pixels. After all, it is NVIDIA's G70 in disguise. This GPU took years to build (if you include the NV40's development cycle) and was for a long time unmatched in performance and feature set. An in-house GPU would probably have cost Sony a fortune to design and implement from the ground up. So why not go to one of the experts when it comes to hurling millions of polygons on screen at dizzying speeds?

Enter the RSX from NVIDIA. It behaves in isolation much like the PC version, so that means that if you could translate the RSX into

a GPU that would find a home in your PC, it would be an eight render output part with 28 fragment shaders and eight vertex units all tied to a 128-bit crossbar and bus. It would support, in API terms, DirectX 9.0c and OpenGL 2.0. Therefore, it is, in not so many words, a strange GeForce 7800GT.

Yes, it's a part from mid-2005, but in the PlayStation 3, it's as capable as the best there is today. Visually, there's little that the RSX cannot do that a high-end graphics processor can. The speed may not be there, but then again, in a closed environment with very little, if any, variables at all, a developer can optimise the code until performance is just right.

With as many as 15 (if we include the Cell's SPUs as well) dedicated vertex processors available to feed the fragment units, the RSX can perform some incredible geometry manipulation tricks (much more than were ever feasible on the PC in the G70 core). Because of a tailor-made API and the vast experience gained by programming for the GPU's abilities before it was used in the PS3, developers can achieve impressive results



FEATURE: Console Gpus



and extract the maximum from the GPU (which could be anywhere between 1.5 to 2.5 times the performance of an equivalent PC card).

For instance, on the PC it was very rare to hit maximum fragment shader throughput because of the limited opportunity for co-issuing instructions. However, on the PS3 it's a completely different story because developers can predict, and most importantly, test the performance and visual complexity of multiple pass and multiple precision fragment programs. Considering that these can be longer than 65,536 instructions per program, the possibilities are virtually endless. The G70 in the form of the RSX is more powerful than the original part could ever be. If what NVIDIA and Microsoft managed to produce with the original NV2A in 2001 is any indication, then this is only the beginning for the PS3. **NAG**



SAPPHIRE RADEON HD2600X2 VS. GECUBE RADEON HD2900PRO

ARE TWO CARDS BETTER than one? The growing prevalence of twin-GPU cards is making it an option for more people these days. In this review, we pit two new and interesting cards against each other. One is a pair of midrange parts on a single card and the other is a lower clocked and lower cost version of a high-end card.

This is one of those agonising decisions that are hotly debated by people at LANs. Do you go with the single massive card, or is it a better deal to get two GPUs if you don't have to worry about needing another slot or messing with connectors? In terms of general perception, a face-off between two midrange parts and a handicapped high-end one seems like a pretty fair fight. So, we've put them head to head to see exactly what you'll get should you be considering them for your next upgrade.

Our first contender is the Sapphire Radeon HD2600X2. It sports two regular GPUs identical to the one used by the HD2600XT and also has CrossFire links on top, so quad-GPU action is indeed a possibility. It's also one of the most massive graphics cards we've ever seen, even compared to previous dual-GPU cards. Fortunately, a lot of the bulk is the big plastic shroud around the heatsinks, which doesn't actually add much in the way of weight.

This is in fact the card's biggest drawback – its sheer size. The plastic actually bulges above the top of the already full-height card. You could theoretically remove the plastic covering by unscrewing

it without much of a functionality loss, but that doesn't solve the other problem the card has: its length. It's actually almost a centimetre longer than the 8800 Ultra, and if that isn't bad enough, the power connectors are on the back. It's also significantly taller than the Ultra, even factoring in the latter's heatsink bulge.

Therefore, for many users with popular cases, this card simply won't fit.

Basically, you need either a server-size case or one that mounts the motherboard upside down, since any case with 3.5-inch hard drives at the back of where the graphics card slot will be on the motherboard is very likely to have them too close for this card to fit and still manage to connect the power lines (even if the hard drives aren't installed).

If this were a dual 2900-series GPU, the size would be less of an issue, since anyone shopping in that price and performance class can likely afford a large case and probably already has one for cooling needs. But considering where this card falls in price and performance, that's not a good assumption to make, so we have to give it a bit of knock here since it may cause serious problems for mere mortals with normal cases. It's not as if you can just resolve this with a driver or BIOS update. It's a critical product flaw and it's unreasonable to expect someone to buy a new case to fit a card in this price class. Those looking to buy one should consider test-fitting it first.

Our second entrant in this versus review

SAPPHIRE RADEON HD2600X2 SPECS

GPU	R630 x 2
CORE CLOCK	800MHz
SHADER VERSION	DX10
PIPELINES	120 x 2
VIDEO MEMORY	512MB x 2
MEMORY CLOCK	1,600MHz
MEMORY BUS	128-bit x 2

SCORE



is the GeCube Radeon HD2900Pro, which is essentially a clocked-down 2900XT. It has exactly the same number of pipelines and the same memory interface; it's just clocked lower. This won't be true with the upcoming 2900GT, which will be clocked the same as the Pro, but will have a third of the pipes and half the memory bus. So, be careful not to confuse the two. One of the good parts about the 2900Pro is that there is a reasonably priced 1GB version coming for those who really think 512MB just isn't enough video memory right now. However, in reality, the 512MB card should be fine for most current and near-future games.

At first glance, the board itself looks like a 2900XT. In fact, it's impossible to tell the two



And you
thought the
8800 Ultra
was big?

GEcube RADEON HD2900PRO SPECS

GPU	R600
CORE CLOCK	600MHz
SHADER VERSION	DX10
PIPELINES	320
VIDEO MEMORY	512MB
MEMORY CLOCK	1,600MHz
MEMORY BUS	512-bit

SCORE



apart as they are identical except for clock speed. We wouldn't be surprised if the more courageous overclockers tried flashing them to 2900 XT BIOSes, but we had no problems overclocking normally with ATITool, unlike the 2600X2, which just didn't want to OC with anything we could find. In fact, this was the best feature of the 2900Pro: we were able to clock it to 820/2,000, well past the 600/1,600 stock and even the 740/1,650 of the 2900XT. We could probably have pushed it a bit more with some effort, but it was stable with minimal fuss and a realistic OC for most gamers. We suspect that AMD may be trying to get rid of the hot and greedy R600 chips quickly to make room for the newer R670 chips for the 2950 series, and the 2900Pro may be the result. This means it's an absolute steal for gamers, especially those willing to at least try a mild overclock.

The 3DMark results speak for themselves and we can see that the 2900Pro seems to not only beat the 2600X2 (though it's not a landslide), but when overclocked, it shoots the 2900XT in the foot. It's obviously aimed at the popular 8800GTS 320M, and it hits the bull's-eye. Considering that two of them cost less than a single 8800GTX, CrossFire is suddenly very tempting for those with the power supply to handle it. **NAG**

Toby Hudson

BENCHMARKS

3DMARK06 OVERALL

2600X2	8,536
2900Pro	9,350
2900Pro 820/2,000	11,000
2900XT	10,487

3DMARK06 SM 2.0

2600X2	3,317
2900Pro	3,917
2900Pro 820/2,000	4,883
2900XT	4,546

3DMARK06 HDR/SM 3.0

2600X2	4,100
2900Pro	4,426
2900Pro 820/2,000	5,509
2900XT	5,182

3DMARK05

2600X2	15,187
2900Pro	16,167
2900Pro 820/2,000	17,136
2900XT	16,818

TEST KIT: Core 2 E6700, MSI P35 Platinum, 2GB DDR2-1066

HARDWARE

RRP → R2,799 | Supplier → Sonic Informed | Website → www.sonicinformed.co.za | Brand → GeCube

RAZER™

DeathAdder™

HIGH PRECISION INFRARED GAMING MOUSE



APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF FRAMES
SEEN WITH A SWIPE OF THE HAND



2.25x FASTER

THAN A STANDARD MOUSE

INCREASE YOUR SPEED + PRECISION



HAND MOVEMENT REQUIRED TO
VIEW THE SCREEN

55% LESS MOTION

THAN A STANDARD MOUSE



ERGONOMIC RIGHT-HANDED DESIGN
COMFORT FOR LONG HOURS OF GAMING

1000HZ ULTRAPOLLING / 1MS RESPONSE
ULTRA FAST RESPONSE TIME

PROGRAMMABLE, ULTRA-LARGE NON-SLIP BUTTONS
WITH HYPERRESPONSE
LOW LATENCY BUTTONS WITH A GOOD GRIP

16-BIT ULTRA-WIDE DATA CHANNEL
FOR LATENCY-FREE INTERACTION WITH THE PC

AWARD-WINNING ON-THE-FLY SENSITIVITY DRIVERS
SWITCH DPI SENSITIVITY WHILE GAMING



FRONTOSA

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

www.frontosa.co.za

JHB +27 11 466 0038 CT +27 21 551 4411



ZALMAN HD160XT

AS THE DEMAND FOR new digital media formats has increased, home-theatre PCs (HTPCs) have become increasingly popular over the last several years, and more and more manufacturers are bringing HTPC chassis to the market. This month, we take a look at Zalman's classy, brushed-aluminium HD160XT HTPC chassis.

The HD160XT has plenty of fans, providing excellent, quiet cooling – an important factor for a good HTPC. The front panel consists of an LCD display, a power button, and a DVD tray. Opening a small door at the bottom of the case reveals the USB and FireWire ports and audio in/out jacks. The LCD touch screen on the front panel displays fan speeds, temperatures, system specs, media information (i.e. what song is playing), the time, etc.

Looking inside the chassis, the HD160XT is both impressive and intimidating because of all the cables snaking around. Along with the standard cables the case is supplied with, a motherboard power cable and a USB cable run along the inside of the case. Next to the USB cable is a VGA cable for the LCD. Zalman tried to make the installation of components such as the motherboard, add-in cards, and hard drives as easy as possible

and your HDDs and optical drives are easily removable. However, the HDD bracket is rotated at 90 degrees to the motherboard and this leaves you with about 5cm of space between the HDD bracket and ODD bracket. This makes changes in cable configuration very difficult. The HDD bracket has vibration dampers that you screw through in order to get zero vibration coming from your hard drives (there's nothing worse than having a silent computer and a rattling hard drive). The finish on the inside of the case is very good and there aren't any sharp corners or edges that can cut or scratch you while you work inside the case.

Overall, the case is a work of art. Although the installation of components, in my opinion, is quite difficult, the outcome is well worth the frustration. The amount of space inside the case is handy when installing components. The front-panel LCD, displaying all the necessary information, opens up new possibilities by eliminating a monitor. The case is neat and all buttons and side panels are secure, strong and of very good quality. The major down sides are the price and the cramped conditions to work in once the HDDs are installed. **NAG**

Bradley Hatton-Jones

SPECS

BAYS	5 x 3.5-inch bays 1 x 5.25-inch bay
FANS	Rear Panel: 2 x 80mm exhaust fans Bottom Panel: 1 x 80mm exhaust fan Side Panel: 1 x 92mm exhaust fan
PORTS	2 x USB 2.0 1 X FireWire Audio in/out
MOTHERBOARD SUPPORT	ATX, microATX
DIMENSIONS	460mm X 435mm X 160mm
WEIGHT	6.9kg

SCORE





ZALMAN ZM-GWB 8800 ULTRA/GTX WATER BLOCK

SUMMER IS HERE AND anybody who owns a GeForce 8 graphics card [8800GTX and Ultra in particular] will attest to the increased temperatures that their graphics cards are operating at. The situation may even be as dire as to under-clock the card or at the least return it to the factory default settings - not so great if you are used to playing at ridiculously high framerates at ultra-high resolutions.

If you have a water-cooling kit for your CPU and don't wish to compromise your graphics card's clocks, then the Zalman Water Block may be just what you need. The water block is easy to fit and takes just a few minutes to have it up and running. The longest part of the installation will be the leak test, but after that is done, the water block is ready and your graphics card will be cooler than it ever was, even in winter.

On our 8800 Ultra we were able to record an idle temperature as low as 47°C and 59°C at maximum load with the graphics card overclocked. This was very impressive given the fact that the graphics card at the best of times used to idle around what is now the maximum temperature when running at reference clocks.

The block is designed in quite a smart manner, as the water flows directly over the GPU, maximising cooling efficiency where it really counts. The EFT and I/O chip are cooled indirectly as water doesn't flow over these areas. However, because the base covers them as well as the GPU, they remain cool to the touch even when the graphics card is under load.

The decision to go with aluminium on Zalman's part seems to have paid off even though some may frown upon it, preferring a copper base and its proven superior thermal conductivity. However, that would have raised the cost and resulted in a much higher retail price for marginally better performance.

In essence, the ZM-GWB 8800 is the cheapest and most efficient way to cool you 8800 GTX or Ultra card. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

SPECS

BASE MATERIAL	Aluminium
WEIGHT	420g (empty)
DIMENSIONS	93mm x 183mm x 31mm
TUBING COMPATIBILITY	13mm x 9mm, 12mm x 8mm, 11mm x 8mm, 10mm x 8mm

SCORE



HARDWARE

RRP → R748 | Supplier → Frontosa | Website → www.frontosa.co.za | Brand → Zalman

RAZER™

Diamondback 3G

3G
INFRARED
SENSOR



1800dpi 3G Infrared Sensor

The 3G infrared sensor in the Razer Diamondback™ 3G enables movement speeds at 2.25 times faster when compared to a standard 800dpi optical sensor. Before the enemy sees you, he's been fragged.



FrostBlue



FlammedRed



EarthGreen



FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

www.frontosa.co.za

JHB +27 11 466 0038 CT +27 21 551 4411

ANTEC P190 + 1200

THE 'P' IN THE P190 stands for performance. According to Antec's Website, the P190 is, "a case that stands above the rest. The biggest and the best, the P190 has room to handle even the biggest hardware; ExtendedATX, multiple graphics cards, dual CPUs, and liquid-cooling are all no problem for the P190."

The front of the P190 comes across as very plain, with nothing being revealed other than the front-mounted USB ports, FireWire port and audio jacks. A very light and easy-to-open magnetised door covers the front panel. This door covers the drive bays as well as the power and reset switches. The top of the case sports two grills for the 140mm TriCool fans and a very large grill for Antec's 200mm Big Boy fan. The case also has a 120mm TriCool fan situated in the lower chamber (more about the chambers later) and a rear-mounted 120mm TriCool fan. With all this cooling power, one would expect a massive dust problem, especially with the 200mm Big Boy fan. However, Antec has taken care of this and each fan is equipped with its own removable dust filter, making cleaning easy.

The P190's cooling is well thought out. Once you open up the case, the first thing you notice is that the case is separated into chambers. The first large chamber accommodates the motherboard and add-in cards, while the chamber directly below it is for the power supply units. There are also two hard drive chambers, each completely isolated from the other. The reason for all these chambers is to keep cooling controlled. These chambers ensure that heat emitted by the power supply units, for example, doesn't affect any of the other components (such as the motherboard and graphics cards). Although Antec's chamber

system is superb and expels the PSUs' heat very fast (keeping the inside of the case and the components cool), it would have been better having the PSUs' chamber at the top of the case.

Powering all your hardware in the case is Antec's unique Neo-Link dual power supply system. It consists of a dual setup of two individual power supplies linked together to give you a total of 1,200 watts of power. Although a nifty idea, it has its problems. Each power supply has its own section to power. The 650W PSU powers the motherboard and add-in cards while the 550W PSU powers your drives. Therefore, if you have two graphics cards in an SLI setup, more than half of the 650W PSU's power will be used for the graphics cards. In addition, instead of having one power connector to power both PSUs, each power supply unit requires its own power cable, meaning a mess of cables protruding from the back of the case. It would have been better if Antec had linked both PSUs to one power supply input.

While installing hardware into the chassis, one realises just how much space there is available in the P190, making it possible to install monster graphics cards on your motherboard. The case also has a few openings around the built-in motherboard rack so that your cables can lie behind the motherboard without getting in the way of fans or looking untidy. The chassis comes equipped with a snake-like LED situated at the top of the inside of the case to provide light while you are working in the case in cramped, dark areas (like under your desk). You'll soon realise that this LED is a necessity, because with a chassis weighing 19.6kg, you won't be moving it around much. **NAG**

Bradley Hatton-Jones

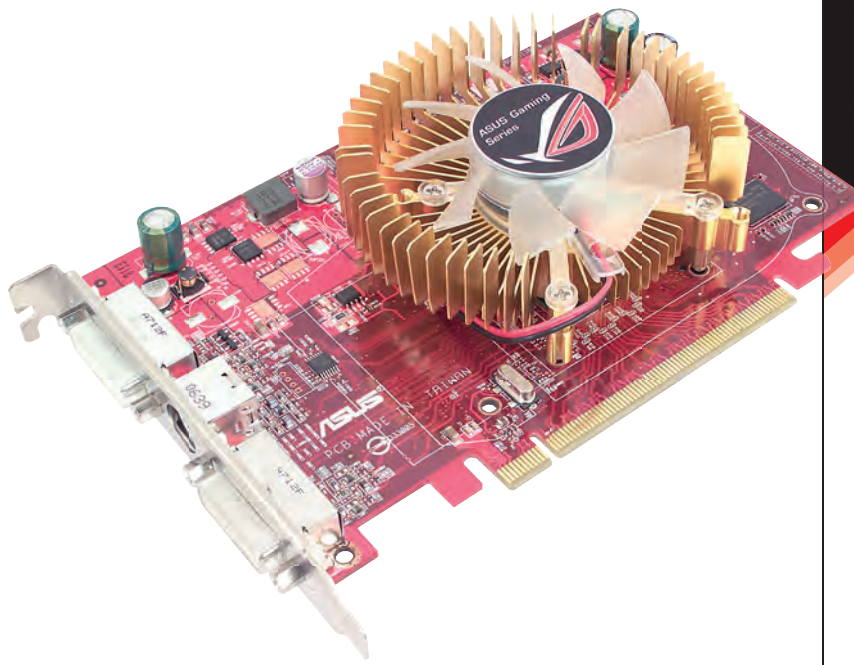


SPECS

BAYS	7 x 3.5-inch bays 4 x 5.25-inch bays
PSU	Neo-Link 1,200W dual power supply system
FANS	2 x top 140mm TriCool fans 1 x rear 120mm TriCool fan 1 x lower chamber 120mm TriCool fan 1 x side 200mm Big Boy fan with air filter
PORTS	2 x USB 2.0 1 x FireWire Audio in/out
MOTHERBOARD SUPPORT	ATX/ExtendedATX
DIMENSIONS	515mm x 205mm x 593mm
WEIGHT	19.6kg

SCORE





ASUS EAH2600PRO

THERE'S NO DENYING THAT the R6XX line of graphics cores, other than the 2900 XT and the 2900 Pro, is very disappointing (much like the competing 8600 range from NVIDIA, but these are even worse because of a number of issues beyond the scope of this review).

The specifications look the part, but the performance is far from satisfactory; and from looking at the numbers alone, one would expect the performance to be far better than last generation's mid-range products. Sadly, this is not the case, because despite having 120 stream processors, they are no better than the 16 stream processors found on competing products from NVIDIA.

Be it less-than-optimal performance scaling on the hardware side or less-than-ideal driver development, the 2600 range is disappointing. Not all is lost, however, as the 2600 range is really cheap; and despite the below-par performance, the 2600 range performs at the same level (and sometimes better) as the previous generation's X1650 XT. With the added advantage of hardware-accelerated high-definition content playback and DX10.1 capabilities, the situation with the 2600 isn't so grim anymore. With the ASUS EAH2600PRO, ASUS has done a stellar job at producing a card that not only clocks well, but also runs incredibly cool even at the overclocked settings. We were able to achieve a respectable 750MHz core clock speed on the 2600PRO and 1.2GHz on the memory. At increased frequencies, the performance was marginally better, but not enough to match that of the 2600 XT, which is much faster than the Pro but unfortunately costs much more.

If you are on a tight budget and find yourself stuck with a graphics card from several generations ago, such as the X600 or GeForce 5700 range, then this may be the card that will deliver an increase, not only in performance, but in features as well, without breaking the bank. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

SPECS

GPU	RV630
CORE CLOCK	600MHz
SHADER VERSION	SM 4.0
STREAM PROCESSORS	120
VIDEO MEMORY	256MB
MEMORY CLOCK	1GHz
MEMORY BUS	128-bit

SCORE



HARDWARE

RRP → R1,200 | Supplier → ASUSTek Computer Inc. | Website → <http://za.asus.com> | Brand → ASUS

ZALMAN
COOL INNOVATIONS

Life is quieter with Zalman

ZM-MFC2

Real time display of power consumption



Four sensors for temperature monitoring and display

Monitoring and control of one PWM fan & three standard fans

Alarm system to notify non-operation of any of the fans

Fan's operation status indicated with animated propeller images

ZM-MFC1 Plus

Comprehensive Control of Cooling Performance and Noise



6 Channel Multi Fan Controller

Aluminum Front Panel

Fast & Easy Access to Fan RPM Control

Color & Intensity Variable LEDs



FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

www.frontosa.co.za

JHB +27 11 466 0038 CT +27 21 551 4411

AIRLIVE AIRVIDEO-2000

RRP→ R2699 | Supplier→ Nology
Website→ www.nology.co.za | Brand→ AirLive

THE AIRVIDEO-2000 IS LABELLED as a "wireless projector server", which may make some readers wonder what it's doing in a gaming magazine. However, we found it to be a nice alternative to having to set up and configure a fussy media playing PC or getting all your media to play nice with the Xbox 360 so you can watch it on TV.

The box itself is a tiny little thing, easily mistaken for a small wireless router. It has VGA and stereo audio out and supports resolutions of 800 x 600, 1,024 x 768, and 1,280 x 720, making it a nice fit for 720p HD videos. While the audio is only stereo, few video files have 5.1 sound tracks these days, so it's not really that bad a fit, though a future HDMI version would be nice to see.

Setting up the AirVideo-2000 is a piece of cake. You connect it to on a wireless or wired network and browse to it. You'll find a login page with the small driver and utility for it, which install without the need to reboot. Then you run the client and enter the code it displays on the screen. The reason for this last step is so someone else on the network can't hijack a screen they can't see.

Once set up, there are two modes. The first just duplicates your desktop. The more interesting one is video mode, in which you can feed a video file to stream. We had no problems streaming 720p videos even via wireless, and it worked with most formats and codecs including DivX and XviD AVIs and

SPECS

SUPPORTED RESOLUTIONS	800 x 600, 1,024 x 768, 1,280 x 720
OUTPUTS	VGA, stereo audio
NETWORK	100mbps Ethernet
WIRELESS	125mbps Turbo-G
SUPPORTED FORMATS	AVI, WMV, DivX, Xvid

SCORE



WMVs without hassle. We couldn't get it to play some more obscure file types like .mkv though.

While it's a bit pricey, it's still worth considering versus an even more expensive and bulky PC for the living room. Hopefully AirLive will come up with a more home-centric version with HDMI support soon. **NAG**

Toby Hudon



AIRLIVE WMU-6500FS

RRP→ R999 | Supplier→ Nology
Website→ www.nology.co.za | Brand→ AirLive

HERE'S SOMETHING YOU PROBABLY need, but just don't know yet. There are many external hard drive cases on the market. Some of them even have LAN support. But this one is special. The WMU-6500FS is a "3.5-inch Wireless Hard Drive and Downloader." What it means is that this baby can be fed links to FTP sites, BitTorrent sources, and, with an upcoming patch, even eDonkey/eMule sources, and it downloads them itself!

Why is this so great? It means never having to agonise about needing to reboot a PC that's almost done with a file you've been waiting for ages to finish. It also means less CPU overhead eating away at your gaming performance, since it's on a dedicated box.

Fortunately, the WMU-6500FS accommodates either SATA or IDE hard drives, so it's perfect for recycling old hardware. If you've just upgraded to a new drive and are wondering what to do with your old one, there are far worse things you could put it in than one of these. It even has two USB ports on the back that can be used to extend its space to other 'dumb' USB hard drive cases, so it's not hard to see this becoming the main server for a home network.

Under the hood is a little Linux server with

a Web interface. We had a couple of issues with NAT translation from our router, but nothing that couldn't be ironed out. Both wireless and wired network connections are quick and easy to set up, and queuing files is just a matter of cut and paste. AirLive seems to be adding interesting features with firmware updates (such as the upcoming eDonkey support), and since it can use SATA, it won't be obsolete for a long time to come. Everybody with an Internet connection and a spare hard drive should have one of these. **NAG**

Toby Hudon

SPECS

DRIVE TYPE	SATA/IDE
NETWORK	100mbps Ethernet
WIRELESS	125mbps Turbo-G
EXPANSION	2 x USB
PROTOCOLS	FTP, Torrent, Edonkey

SCORE





ZALMAN RESERATOR XT

THE ZALMAN RESERATOR RANGE of water-cooling kits is not new. From the first passively cooled unit to the XT, which employs active cooling, Zalman's cooling solutions are renowned for their ease of installation and their good looks.

With the Reserator XT, Zalman has carried on in this tradition, but has moved on to a new playing field. The XT is by far one of the best-looking water-cooling systems we have ever had for review, and should look good next to any PC. One is almost tempted to find a matching case to not detract from the incredible build quality and finish of the Reserator XT.

In terms of cooling ability, the Zalman Reserator does better than your average low-end cooling system. With the fan turned up to full speed, it manages to be quite impressive provided you are not in a very hot environment where the cooling abilities of the unit are diminished because of the ambient air temperature. Having said that, the Reserator was more than capable of keeping our quad-core QX6850 stable at 3.8GHz, with the fan speed set to auto. It may not have been capable of keeping the QX6850 anywhere near stable at 4GHz like the Swiftech Apex Ultra+ unit, but it sure looks much better than any other water-cooling kit available locally, or anywhere else for that matter.

The Zalman Reserator is a work of art and is worth owning just because of its looks alone, which rival many HTPC cases. The Reserator XT would look just fine next to a high-end home entertainment unit in the lounge. Zalman has produced a gem of a water-cooling kit that deserves a look by anyone in the market. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

SPECS

MATERIAL	Anodized Aluminium
WEIGHT	7kg
DIMENSIONS	350mm x 180mm x 210mm
PUMP FLOW RATE	300L/h
CPU BLOCK MATERIAL	Copper

SCORE



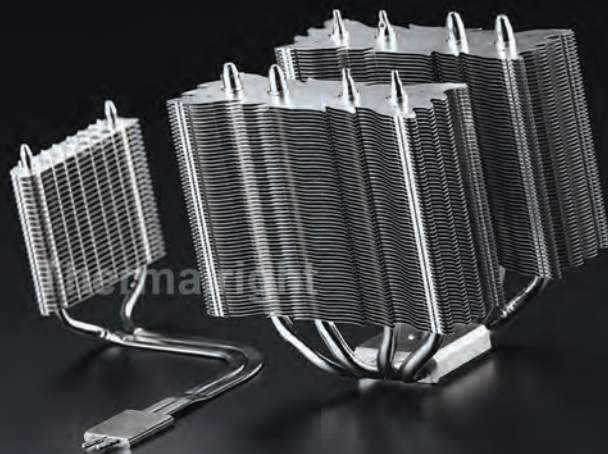
HARDWARE

RRP → R4,199 | Supplier → Frontosa | Website → www.frontosa.co.za | Brand → Zalman

Thermalright

IFX-14
Inferno Fire eXtinguisher

Quench the fire in your computer system



Back-side heat pipe Cooler



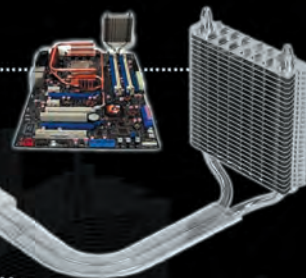
IFX-14 Heatsink Body

- * Larger surface area for heat dissipation
- * Designed for better air flow management to work with the heatsink fans and the air inside computer case
- * Optional to rotate the heatsink 90 degrees to best fit your system configuration
- * Multi-platform compatible backplate for installation on vast number and type of motherboard.

Weight: 790g (heatsink only)
Dimension: L146.2 x W124 x H161 mm (heatsink only)
Recommended Fan: All 120mm & 140mm Fan

IFX-14 Back-side Heat Pipe Cooler

Back-side dual heatpipe heatsink adds additionally cools CPU and also takes care of the heat coming from the back of the motherboard to extend the life expectancy and stability of motherboard



Weight: 130g (heatsink only)
Recommended Fan: All 80mm & 70mm Fan
Dimension (heatsink only): L134.5 x W163.5 x H112.6 mm



FRONTOSA
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

www.frontosa.co.za

JHB +27 11 466 0038 CT +27 21 551 4411

UNIVERSAL ABIT IP35 PRO

THE P35 CHIPSET FROM Intel, as it stands today, is truly the fastest and possibly the best chipset that has been released so far specifically for the Core 2 platform. Positioned as a replacement to the 965 chipset, the P35 seems to have eclipsed all expectations and managed to end up being loved by enthusiasts and casual gamers alike.

After all, what's not to like about a 65nm chipset that runs very cool, but also overlocks to incredible levels without needing too much fiddling in the BIOS. The P35 chipset has one downside, however, and as a result, the Universal abit IP35 Pro also inherits this limitation. Unfortunately, the secondary PCI Express interface, while full length, isn't 16 lanes but only four. This means that while CrossFire works well on the board, it is less than ideal in performance, and as a result gives significantly lower numbers than would be able if 16- or eight-lane PCI Express interconnects were available.

With that being said, that's about the only downside to the chipset, and this board, in simple English, is "Great!"

Just when we are about to give up on Universal abit and its motherboards, they always seem to produce a gem that convinces us to give them another chance. With the disappointing IN9 32X-MAX we reviewed last month, we were ready to sideline Universal abit... until the IP35 Pro showed up. Simple in layout but not so feature rich as the other board, it's a well-priced overclocking board

with a purpose. It may not have the additional features and accessories, but it does have what others don't: very good performance and tweaking options via Universal abit's famed uGuru-tweaking menu in the BIOS. In an almost bizarre move for Universal abit, they have produced a no-nonsense but potent board that doesn't claim or try to be anything else other than the best P35 motherboard available today.

Does it achieve that? No, it doesn't, but it comes pretty close - in fact, it's closer than many other P35 boards we've tested. The IP35 Pro is designed for overclocking and this is where it excels. One of the ways in which we test the overclocking capability of a board is by installing an X6800 B1 early-engineering sample CPU with a known 540MHz FSB to see how stable the motherboard is at this speed.

With the multiplier dropped all the way to 6x, the IP35 Pro booted up just fine, but stalled during POST. All that was needed was an increase in the MCH voltage, and the system was stable enough to boot into Windows and run Prime95 and Orthos for several hours without a reboot or overheating. The IP35 Pro really is 'off limits' (according to the marketing campaign). The package could have been a little better. However, given the low price of the board, it cannot be faulted, as there are more expensive boards that won't give you this level of control over the chipset.

It's the little things as well that make the

IP35 Pro stand out, such as the boot code LED (typical of Universal abit motherboards) and the minimalist heat pipe configuration. We have seen other motherboards with overly complex heat pipe configurations that have supposedly been designed for maximum heat dissipation. However, that is usually not the case and if it is, it's usually offset by messy heat pipe configurations. On the IP35 it's simple yet effective. Around the CPU socket, there is ample room with the capacitors not extending much above the CPU socket, making this board perfect for extreme overclockers or those who have extraordinarily large heatsinks.

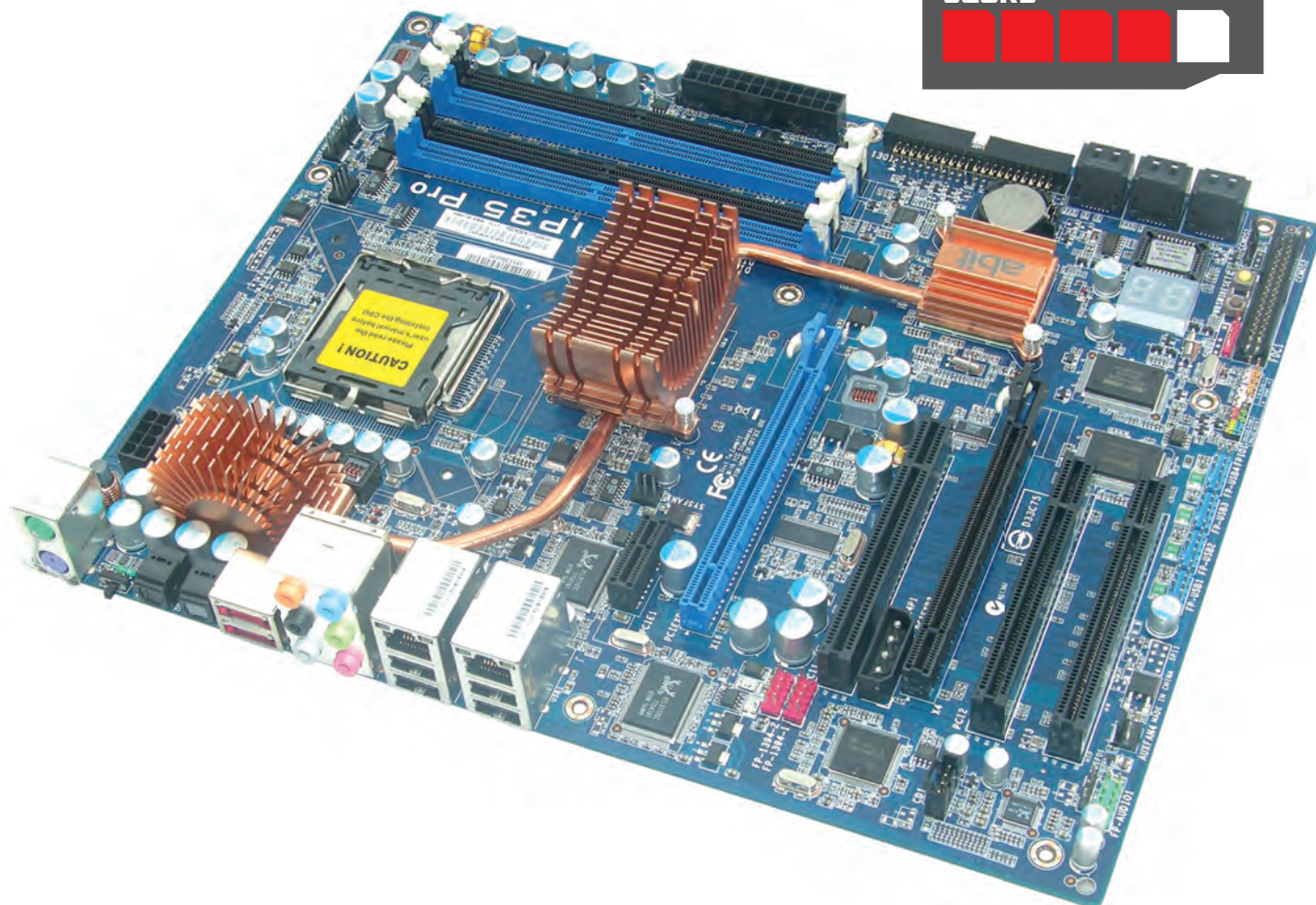
The IP35 Pro is right up there with the best P35-based motherboards and is worth buying if you're in the market for a performance motherboard at a decent price. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko

SPECS

CHIPSET	Intel P35
MEMORY BANKS	4 x DDR2 184-pin (8GB Max.)
CPU SUPPORT	Intel Pentium 4 D/Core 2/Core 2 Extreme/Core 2 Quad
SLOTS	2 x PCI-E 16x, 1 x PCI-E 1x, 3 x PCI 2.2
CONNECTORS	6 x SATA 3Gb/sec, 4 x USB 2.0, 2 x Gigabit Ethernet, 2 x eSATA

SCORE



OCZ DDR2 PC6400 PLATINUM

RRP→ R499 (1GB) | Supplier→ Syntech SA
Website→ www.syntechsa.co.za | Brand→ OCZ

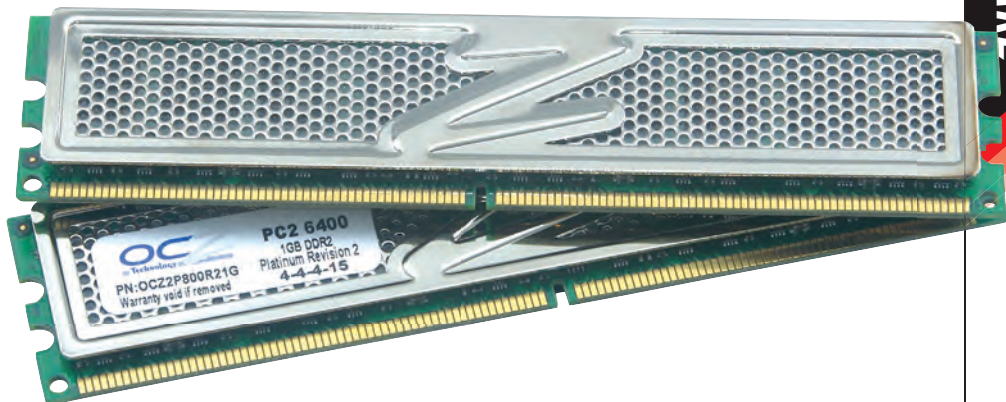
YES, THAT'S RIGHT; THE retail price of each of these modules is R499. Not only are these modules cheap, fast, and quite stunning, but they are OCZ modules. That means you can expect great performance and incredible overclocking headroom (of which there is plenty). We've never had value such as this, and if you were thinking of investing in some quality DDR2, this is the time to do it - especially with this RAM.

Covered in a honeycomb golden mesh, the OCZ modules look the part and sure do perform. Rated at a speedy 4-4-4-15, it's amazing that we were able to reach the magical 1GHz mark with these modules at these timings. Sure, the voltage needed to be increased and the secondary timings needed to be tweaked, but what is important is that these modules are as capable as some other higher end parts costing more than twice the amount for similar performance. The most incredible thing about these RAM modules is that they continued to scale past the 1,066MHz mark, finally topping out at 1,100MHz (but at 5-5-5-15 instead of the tighter timings). As some P35 boards scale well over the 533MHz mark on the FSB,

running this RAM 1:1 on such a board at the given timings will give massive bandwidth and result in impressive synthetic bandwidth benchmarks.

At R499 there is no faulting these sticks. They may not come as a matched dual-channel pair, but that is hardly a concern, as all the modules we had were capable of the 1GHz mark at the reference timings. If you are in need of RAM or want a secondary 2GB set to fill up your memory banks, then you should look no further than the OCZ DDR2 PC6400 Platinum set. There simply isn't better value in the country at this stage, and chances are it's unlikely to get better than this. **NAG**

Neo Sibeko



SPECS

CHIPSET	Micron D9
RATED SPEED	DDR2 800MHz (PC6400)
TIMINGS	4-4-4-15
VOLTAGE	N/A

SCORE



entertainment[africa.com](http://entertainmentafrica.com)

games
music
reviews
movies
exclusives
events
gaming
mobile
firstplays
tracks
cinema
bands
streams
news
promos
downloads
trailers
forums
videos
lvds-umd
comps
gadgets
showtimes
charts
interviews



win stuff
gaming
music
movies
gadgets
prizes!
24/7 - 365

entertainment[africa.com](http://entertainmentafrica.com)

the latest in gaming news!

THE NAG FIELD GUIDE TO GAMING

IF YOU HAVE PARENTS and they're not gamers (*Solitaire* doesn't count), please take this magazine to them and have them read this article with you. If they're busy, hand it to them later so they can read it at their leisure. If your parents do game or if you're a parent and play games, this may serve as a good, fun refresher course.

If you're reading this because your offspring handed you the magazine or if you stumbled upon NAG via a cosmic accident, welcome to the NAG Field Guide to Gaming.

As a gaming magazine, NAG has been around for almost ten years now. Can you believe it? Some days it feels like it has taken forever; other days it feels like only yesterday that we had the double-CD bundle on the cover (long-time readers will remember) - those were the crazy days!

In such a short time, the face of gaming has changed dramatically and very rapidly - perhaps too fast and too dramatically if you ask certain 'old timers' (who should now be approaching 30). Gaming was a specialist hobby, something only a few pursued thanks to their technical expertise or due to their financial freedom to dive into such an expensive pastime. Very quickly, gaming was noticed as an additional entertainment medium. When you just don't feel like reading, listening to music, watching a movie, playing a sport, or twiddling your thumbs, what then? That's where gaming comes in and it's easy to see why younger generations are drawn towards gaming like moths to light: it holds infinite wonder, but takes time to wrestle some dexterity out of your poor hands. As you get older, games that were child's play to you before suddenly become puerile exercises in twitch reflexes; and that's no fun. Thankfully, there is so much variation in games that the odds of there being nothing that appeals to you and your physical limitations is next to nil. Just like the entertainment industry, gaming is growing fast and reaching more markets, more groups, and more people every day.

We're an optimistic lot, so we are positive about the future. That's why we've created this guide.

Usually, NAG's writers write for NAG's readers: we throw around words like 'frag' and 'pixel shaders' without irony, because, truth be told, we assume that if you're going to buy a R39 magazine about gaming, you're doing it because you're already knee deep in fighting off aliens, Nazis, demons from hell or boredom. Assumption being the mother of various problems, without some kind of primer or guide to help newcomers, this market we depend on (and believe in) just isn't going to grow. Therefore, in the interest of sharing the incredibly diverse universe of gaming with those who've yet to pass customs, this article will slow things down

considerably and elaborate. If you have a basic knowledge about things like 'RTS games' or if you've been playing the *Call of Duty* series because you appreciate the themes, you may find this series of articles painfully obvious and you should feel free to skip what you already know. If none of the terms has made any sense to you at all, fear not.

The great thing about gaming (if you ask most gamers) is that once you've got the basics down, your own natural curiosity will propel you forward to places you previously couldn't have imagined. Because there's so much ground to cover, we've split this feature into three parts: Boot Camp, Patrol Duty, and Frontlines.

In this instalment of the NAG Field Guide to Gaming, we'll cover Boot Camp, which is aimed at giving you a foundation and covering the basics. We've also included some homework (Your Mission) for you if you're interested, which we hope will help you better understand all this. Next month will be Patrol Duty, which involves wading into the muck, checking out the scene and peeking in on the natives. Patrol Duty will be much more hands-on and will assume that you've completed your homework from Boot Camp. Active Duty will take what you know and teach you how to apply it so that you have fun no matter what you're doing. At that point, you'll be able to walk up to the gaming shelf and make an educated decision on what to play, what to avoid and what might scratch your gaming itch.

THE SUPER GENRES

Just like music, games come in so many flavours that it eventually gets very hard to tell what type of game a game is. Some may say knowing the genres isn't that important, but it helps with classifying and understanding the elements in games that appeal to you. The Super Genres and Genres themselves are not set in stone or cosmic law, but rather an unspoken agreement that certain game mechanics tend to naturally group games together. Just like music, a game can be just one genre or many at the same time: punk rock, death metal, classical techno, etc. describe a blending of ideas between genres. Action Adventure, Fighting, Role-playing, Simulation, and Real-time Strategy are the same: they describe ideas being implemented and combined to create games that do certain things.

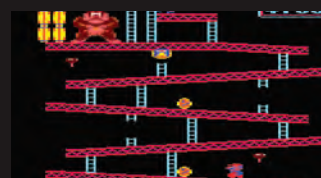
There are, in general, eight Super Genres: Action, Adventure, Fighting, Role-playing, Platform, Simulation, Sports, and Strategy.

Action games are the most basic and straightforward of the genres and one of the broadest. Action games emphasise combat. Generally, fighting games and first-person shooters fall into this category. Examples of this genre include *God of War*, *Soul Calibur*, *Call of Duty*, *Far Cry*, and *Crysis*.

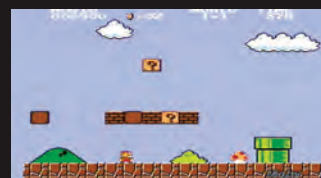
PART ONE: BOOT CAMP

THE EVOLUTION OF MARIO

Mario, the most classic gaming icon next to the pie-chart *Pac Man*, has evolved quite a bit over the years.



Donkey Kong (1982)



Super Mario Bros (1985)



Super Mario World (1990)



Mario 64 (1996)

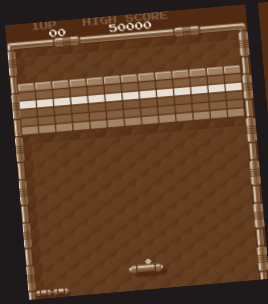


Super Mario Sunshine (2002)



Super Mario Galaxy (2007)

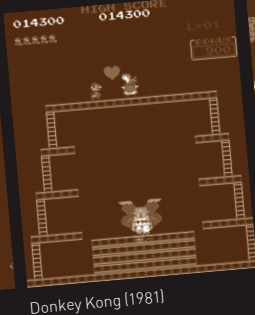
the classics



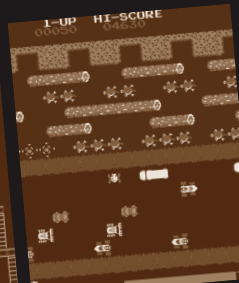
Arkanoid (1986)



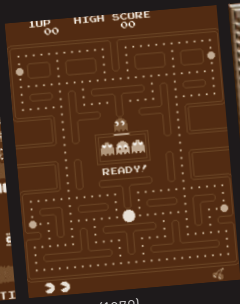
Asteroids (1979)



Donkey Kong (1981)



Frogger (1981)



Pac-Man (1979)



Tetris (1985)

The Super Genres





Fighting



platformer



role-playing



simulation





Adventure games are practically prehistoric, literally getting their name from an old 1970's game called *Colossal Cave Adventure*, which was originally simply titled "Adventure." Adventure games are not defined like adventure movies or books. Instead, Adventure is a model that describes a certain experience. It usually involves casting the player as the protagonist of a story and having them solve puzzles along the way [by interacting with the characters or the environment in the game, usually in a non-confrontational manner]. The predecessor to Adventure is actually the now-defunct Interactive

Fiction. Back in the early days of gaming, Interactive Fiction involved typing in commands such as "get rope" or "go west." In the late 1990s, this genre dropped in popularity. However, since 2005 it's shown a revival with games such as *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney* and *Dreamfall*.

Fighting games, also known as 'beat 'em ups', emphasize one-on-one combat between two characters (one of which may be computer controlled). The genre first appeared in 1976 (SEGA's *Heavyweight Boxing*) and has naturally gained immense popularity. Most fighting games involve linking together long chains of specific button presses on the controller to activate the attacks, which are usually dramatic and often physically impossible. Early fighting games include *Street Fighter II*, with newer additions being the *Dead or Alive* series as well as *WWE SmackDown! vs. RAW*.

Role-playing games (often referred to as CRPGs - Computer Role-playing Games - by purists) draw their gameplay inspirations from traditional role-playing games such as *Dungeons & Dragons*. Most role-playing games come in two flavours: one involves the player creating a character and moving around a world, participating in non-linear storylines where the player's decisions affect the outcome; the other has the player in control of a party of pre-created characters that adventure through a linear storyline. Role-playing games often require the player to make important choices with regards to the progression of their character's skills and abilities, usually by assigning points earned in combat towards skills or statistics such as Strength, Agility, etc. The most popular role-playing games include *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* and the *Final Fantasy* series.

Platform games, also known as Platformers, involve travelling between platforms while jumping (which may occasionally involve substitutes or additions such as swinging or bouncing). The most iconic Platformers are associated with specific 'mascots' like Sonic the Hedgehog, Mario and Rayman. Platformers are one of the earlier genres of videogames and at their peak were the most popular on the market. As 3D games became more popular, the genre experienced a rapid decline. Traditionally, Platformers were 2D and viewed

the environment from a 'cutaway' perspective. Today, 2D Platformers primarily exist on handheld consoles such as the Nintendo DS and PSP. *Mario 64* represents a classic 3D platformer, while *Castlevania* incorporates role-playing elements into the platforming mechanics.

Simulation games aim to simulate an experience, such as flying an aircraft or landing on the moon, as realistically as practically possible (taking into account physics and other real-world limitations). *Microsoft Flight Simulator* is a good example of this, but Simulation games may extend to non-realistic situations as well such as space flight and exploration. A sub-genre of simulation is the 'God Game', which often doesn't have a set goal and allows the player to have control over an ecosystem such as micromanaging a family or overseeing the rising of a civilisation. *The Sims* is a good example of a God Game, while *Caesar* and *The Settlers* are examples of Management Simulation titles.

Sports games are the most straightforward and emulate the playing of traditional physical sports. Some emphasise actually playing the sport while others may have the player managing the strategy behind the sport. This genre emerged early (*PONG*!) and remains unsurprisingly popular. Sports games are often the primary entry point for most new gamers.

Strategy is the largest (and according to a 2005 study, the most popular) genre. Strategy games focus on careful and skilful thinking and planning in order to win. They can either be real time or turn based and may focus on strategy or tactics. Most Strategy games place a region or army under the player's control. Some games even factor in commerce, construction, and management of diplomatic affairs. The *Civilization* series is the most visible example of this genre, which simulates notable periods in history. Real-time Strategy games such as *Age of Empires*, *Command & Conquer*, *StarCraft*, and *WarCraft* involve gathering or harvesting resources, micromanaging an economy, and producing units with which to defend that economy. A notable sub-genre of Strategy games is the 4X Strategy game. 4X usually involves four primary phases: eXplore, eXpand, eXploit, and eXterminate. Examples of 4X games include *Galactic Civilizations*, *Master of Orion*, *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*, and *Civilization*.

These eight form the primary foundations of all games, and from there, they subdivide into a plethora of variations. There are educational games, party games, puzzle games, pinball games, stealth games, light-gun games and more. However, discovering these will be up to you as there are too many to cover here.

YOUR MISSION

Now that you have a very rudimentary

understanding of the Super Genres, we think you're ready to actually sit down and play some games. We suggest that you get yourself a PlayStation 2. There are various consoles out there (Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, Nintendo Wii), and we realise that most people have a computer of some sorts. However, if you're not already gaming on your computer, it's going to be a confusing and convoluted process to try and get the computer ready for gaming (since computer games require far more RAM, HDD space and other technical things). Besides, considering that the PlayStation 2 is the world's most successful console and games for it are dirt-cheap these days (thanks to the Platinum re-release/budget range), it's the ideal platform for beginners. The PlayStation 2 has a huge library of excellent titles; games that are worth playing even though they may be a few years old. When it comes to gaming, it helps to be what we call "platform agnostic," which means you're not tied to any specific console or system: you go where the games go. Because various games only appear on certain consoles, while others may require a very expensive computer to fully enjoy, the PlayStation 2 is a good, cheap starting point and you should be able to find one almost anywhere (Look & Listen, CNA or Incredible Connection) or you can get one second hand from a friend who recently bought a next-generation one. Certain cellphone contracts also include a free PlayStation 2 when you upgrade.

Once you have a PlayStation 2, it's only a matter of deciding what game you want to try. If you're into sports, your choices are easy: any sports game from Take 2 or Electronic Arts (the Take 2 and EA logos appear on the boxes, try to find them) such as *Rugby 2007* or a cricket game will suffice. If you're into racing (but only for the crashing), *Burnout Revenge* just hit Platinum and is an awesome game. For more serious racing, there's the *Gran Turismo* series. Although *Gran Turismo* may not be a pure simulation game, it's still going to require you to drive the car properly.

If you have reasonable computer and you like Management games, try *The Sims* (1) and *Zoo Tycoon*; both should work without any major fuss.

If you're ready for the big time, try to find a copy of *Guitar Hero* (1 or 2, but we recommend 3) for PlayStation 2 (or if you have access to an Xbox 360, grab the 360 version). It may look intimidating, but we have no doubt you'll be rocking like a rock star in under a week.

If nothing above sounds appealing, Captain Jack Sparrow comes to the rescue. *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* for the Xbox 360 or PlayStation 2 is a fun, non-demanding action title that lets you play as Jack Sparrow and lets you saunter your way through a swashbuckling rollercoaster ride... And you can play it with a friend in co-op. **NAG**

ET TU, WSVG?

IN APRIL LAST YEAR, this magazine's multiplayer headline read: "CPL World Series Cancelled, WSVG Founded." It was indeed big news. The collapse of the Cyberathlete Professional League was a turning point in the world of e-sports, bringing to an end a long period of uninterrupted growth, and ushering in the general stagnation that has plagued most of the industry ever since. Hundreds of aspiring professional gamers across the world (including several South Africans) were forced to cancel their travel plans and return to their everyday lives. What made the crash all the more devastating was that it came hot on the heels of the CPL's million-dollar World Tour in 2005; a tournament circuit that for the first time had made it possible for players to earn a real living.

Then came a glimmer of hope. From the CPL's smouldering ashes arose the World Series of Video Games, an organisation so similar it seemed as though the only difference was the absence of Angel Munoz, the CPL's founder and president. The WSVG management consisted largely of ex-CPL staff, their event structure was virtually identical – the very name of the league bordered on plagiarism. What didn't remain the same, however, was the prize money. While Mr Munoz had focussed his budget on player payouts, the WSVG's prizing structure was far below par. Matt Ringel, the WSVG's founder, criticised the previous years' growth as "unsustainable", and promised to introduce a more traditional sporting business model, where the star players would earn the majority of their income through endorsement deals.

While the WSVG didn't come anywhere close to the scale of the CPL's 2005 season, it did provide a relatively stable platform for competition, especially for deathmatch games such as *Quake 4*, allowing players like Sweden's Johan "Toxic" Quick and Russia's Anton "Cooler" Singov to continue entertaining spectators throughout the year. By Mr Ringel's logic, the e-sports industry was simply consolidating its gains of the past. The league's Grand Final event went ahead, against the backdrop of an abortive World Cyber Games in



Monza, Italy, and a lacklustre CPL semi-revival. While progress was slow, the industry had at least managed to stave off a recession.

Mr Ringel's early criticisms of the CPL's business model now seem rather ironic, of course. After the hiring of a new CEO in January, a failed series stop in Dallas (which saw over half of the administrative staff resign on the first day) and the last-minute addition of a stop in Toronto (seeming to indicate that the series was back on track), the WSVG organisation last month withdrew from the e-sports scene in one anticlimactic implosion. All that remains on the official Website is the company's logo, an e-mail address, and the page heading, "WSVG Cancelled."

The statement released by Games Media Properties, the parent company of the WSVG, was equally disappointing. "We have been honoured by the strong support the community has shown in attending our festivals, and watching our competitions online and on television – all in record-setting numbers," it read. "However, the continuing challenges of securing adequate revenues to sustain the production of the WSVG's large-scale events and television programming, in a very crowded field of competitive gaming leagues, has prompted us to re-evaluate our direction as an organisation."

So-called "PR speak" can sometimes have the exact opposite effect to what was

intended, and the veiled reasons cited for the cancellation served only to enrage the gaming community. Planned WSVG stops in London, Los Angeles, and Jönköping, Sweden, have all been removed from the calendar. Many players had already booked their plane tickets and are unlikely to obtain any form of refund. According to several competitors, there is also the issue of outstanding prize money. In light of the sudden announcement, it remains to be seen whether previous winners will ever receive their cheques.

Games Media Properties now intends to focus its attention on its network of Websites, including GameRiot.com, run by several of the community leaders affected by the league's cancellation. "What kind of weird logic is that?" argues CGS commentator, Paul "Redeye" Chaloner. "Cancel the only tournament series supporting *Quake 4* and then expect those same people to carry on going to their Website? Whilst I wouldn't want people to boycott GameRiot – as it's not the staff's fault – it does seem a little insulting."

Indeed, the cancellation of the WSVG has driven the proverbial nail into the coffin of competitive *Quake 4*. With the Electronic Sports World Cup already over, and the World Cyber Games failing to support a deathmatch game for the third successive year, there are no major *Quake* tournaments scheduled for the remainder of 2007. As *Unreal Tournament 3* looms on the horizon, the next time *Quake* will be seen at an international competition could be after the release of *Quake Zero*. Other communities hard hit by the news are *World of Warcraft* and *Call of Duty*, both of which received the majority of their tournament support from the WSVG.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the CPL has bounced back yet again, having just announced a joint *Counter-Strike 1.6* and *Source* competition. The Championship Gaming Series continues to prepare for its World Finals, and Dreamhack, Sweden's biggest LAN and former host of the WSVG finals, has taken the initiative and increased its own prize purse. As with any economy, a bit of pain can sometimes be just the thing to rejuvenate growth. At any rate, it's better to have the sickness out in the open where it can breathe the fresh air and, if we're lucky, heal itself. **NAG**

CHAMPIONSHIP GAMING SERIES GOES GLOBAL

THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAMING SERIES has revealed the names of six new General Managers who will take charge of its European and Asian franchises.

The UK will be represented by two teams: the London Mint, led by Sujoy Roy, Britain's first professional gamer and founder of the Website ESReality.com; and the Birmingham Salvo, headed by Michael "ODEE" O'Dell, former manager of the multi-gaming team Dignitas. Across the channel, mainland Europe boasts the Berlin Allianz, with respected e-sports journalist, Jonas

"Besel" Alsaker Viken, at the helm, and the Stockholm Magnetik, managed by Emil "Heaton" Christenson, a former *Counter-Strike* star of Ninjas in Pyjamas fame.

Further east, Crystal Kim, a former employee of the World Cyber Games, takes the reigns at South Korea's as-yet-unnamed franchise. And after some controversy involving the alleged extortion of drafted players, the Singaporean franchise has seen the departure of its original General Manager, Chris Soh, and the naming of a new acting GM, Steven Yong, to take his place. **NAG**

The November issue of SACM is on sale now at your local newsagent for R29.95

SACM



www.sacm.co.za



Live the Technology Life

Published by Tide Media

The authority on current information technology and the hardware, software, concepts and people that drive it.

The new-look 124-page SACM is a must-read for IT enthusiasts, computer and gadget users, SOHO and micro businesses and everybody with an interest in the latest advancements in computers, cellular technology, software and peripherals.

The magazine also covers topics ranging from emerging technological trends to internet and online activities, as well as digital entertainment in the home, behind-the-scenes looks at the technology involved in making games and movies, and software that will enhance the reader's computing experience. Each issue is also bundled with a free CD filled with essential software applications and utilities.

"R" IS FOR...

"RAGE, RAGE, RAGE - my favourite event," grins Andrew "Cent" Hadjipaschali, captain of *Counter-Strike* team, Bravado. "And I say this due to the vibe, it just makes you want to have it!"

Amidst the crowded expo floor at the Intel stand, cheers erupting from a full house of spectators, Cent and his team mates took their seats, ready to attempt the impossible. Their opponents, Damage Control, had become a household name in South African e-sports, winning every major *CS* tournament since their formation in 2006. "It plays a major role psychologically," says Cent. "If you can't handle their reputation, you won't beat them."

However, Mr Hadjipaschali (don't ask him how to pronounce that) is in a unique position when it comes to Damage Control: he was once a member of former SA champions Identity Gaming, the team that eventually went on to become DC. Does he ever regret leaving? "The departure was not an easy one," he says. "But looking back now I feel that it was a wise decision. I've always loved being the underdog. There's more pressure and way more competition."

And was his team ready? Relatively poor showings at the Electronic Sports World Cup and World Cyber Games events had cast a shadow over Bravado's ability to perform at rAge. "We had problems getting enough practice," Cent explains. "One week before ESWC we lost one of our members, and we recruited two more before WCG. But once we started learning each other's play styles and practising more with the new additions, we finally put ourselves in a position where we were prepared for rAge."

This year, the tournament followed a rather different format to previous events. Being integrated into the expo instead of having its own separate area, it was more affected by the pressures of time. Thus, only four teams competed in each game type (*Counter-Strike 1.6* and *CS: Source*). For *1.6*, the selection process was based on previous tournament results, and saw DC and Bravado joined by Zero Effect and talented new kids, Virtue Sports. For *Source*, online qualifiers were held prior to the event, with Icon, Ascent, Critical Control and Team Plasma topping the field. For each game type, each team would then play against each other team in a round-robin pool, and the two with the highest number of points would progress to the finals.

Indeed, Bravado proved their mettle, defeating both Zero Effect and Virtue Sports in convincing fashion, and losing by a hair's breadth to DC (16:14 the score). Riding their momentum, they went into the final match with the confidence and hunger that young teams know so well. DC, however, were waiting for them.

"We basically knew we were going to play them on the map *de_nuke*," says Damage Control's Chris "Apocalypse" Laure. "The reason for this is that our *de_train*

is so strong, and nobody dares play us on *de_cbble*. So with five maps, we simply eliminated *de_dust2* and *de_inferno*, and it was always going to be nuke. All these teams are doing the same thing, spending 99% of their energy on the in-game stuff. We had a book with elimination possibilities for each team and we talked a lot about seating arrangements to suit the most likely map. These are the tiny details that experience affords us." True to form, DC's experience won through yet again, and they clinched the final with a score of 16 to 10.

"Bravado's key weakness at the moment is just a lack of individual skill and experience," agrees Cent. "Three of my team mates played their first final at rAge. It was actually a great success for them, as they coped well with the pressure and are now ten times the players they were before the final. I think it could just be a walk down the hill from here."

COUNTER-STRIKE 1.6 RESULTS

1. Damage Control
2. Bravado
3. Virtue Sports
4. Zero Effect

The *Counter-Strike: Source* tournament, unfortunately, featured as much controversy as it did gaming action. NAG caught up with Dimitri "Fragtion" Pappas, spokesperson for team Icon, to get the players' perspective.

"The biggest problem was the tournament PCs," recounts Fraktion. "The head sponsor supposedly promised to supply twenty machines and ultimately only provided ten. The replacement machines were all different - three of us had to use replacement keyboards and one of the sound cards was not working at all. In addition, the machines were overheating, and framerates were falling during the crucial action where they count the most. As a result, every single team that played on those five machines lost their games." One game was even shortened by the tournament administrators to nine rounds per half (as opposed to the standard fifteen). It was also this game, explains Fraktion, that determined the finalists.

The *Source* tournament was ultimately won by Ascent, who bested Critical Control in the final. Somewhat ironically, the only game that Icon played on the working PCs - and the only game they won - was against none other than the eventual winners.

COUNTER-STRIKE: SOURCE RESULTS

1. Ascent
2. Critical Control
3. Icon
4. Team Plasma



Louise "Chronic" van der Bijl, Arena 77's new tournament director, has publicly acknowledged the problems that faced the event, marking the first official apology in South African gaming history.

"Our main issues did stem from the sponsored machines," she says, "and since I had to keep a very strict rein on the time, I made a few on-the-spot decisions which did affect the teams in a negative way. We tried to rectify problems as they arose, but a few times we just couldn't do it. The gamers put up with a lot from me. They deserve honesty, and an apology on my part. I don't believe in hiding from your mistakes."

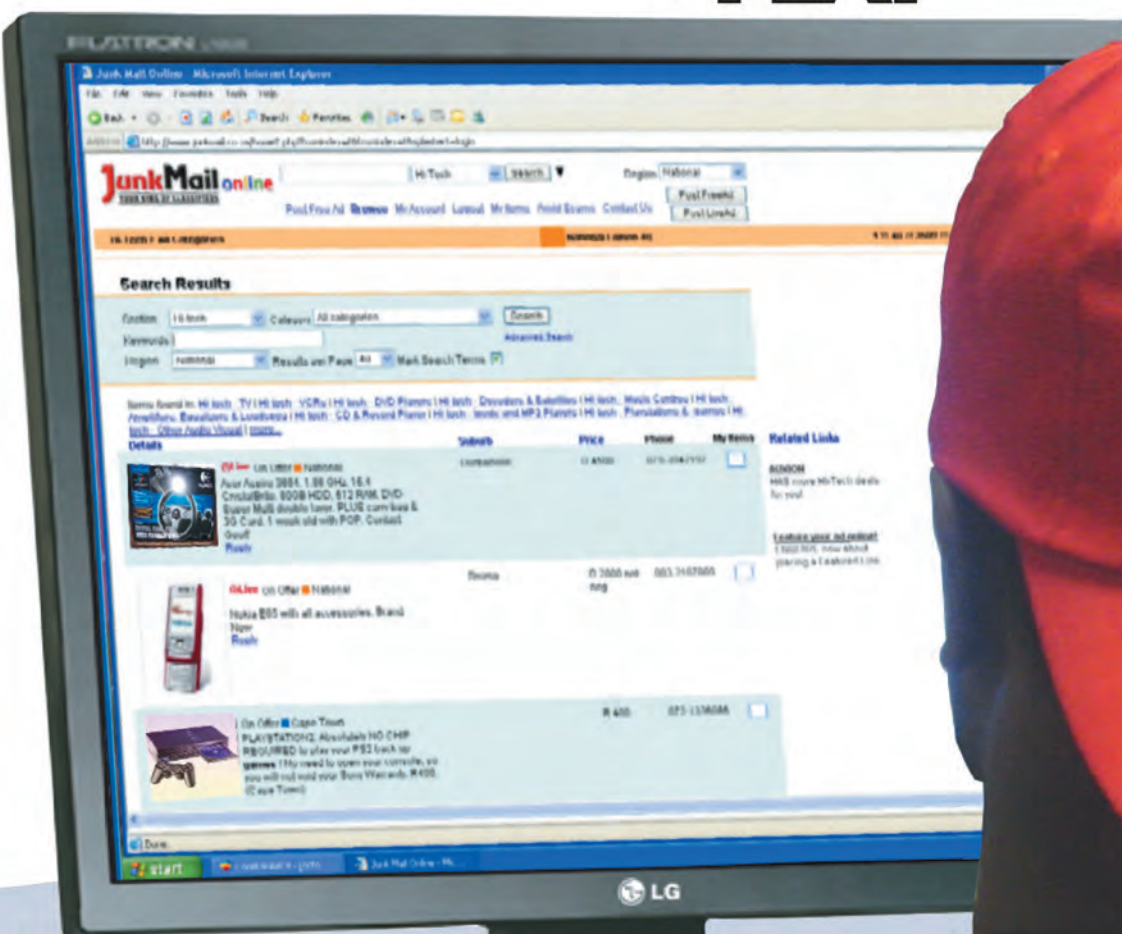
Despite the problems, most players we interviewed had positive views of the event as a whole. "The expo, the support from all the companies and vendors - it was a major success and great for anyone interested in technology," muses Cent. "And the VIP room was amazing! Free food and drinks - do you know what a mission it is getting to the food court on a busy day at rAge?"

"I'm a dedicated competitor and don't actually care about all these new cool games coming out," says Fraktion. "But I did take a walk through the expo in my free time... and it sure felt like rAge."

don't leave your chair..

Hundreds
of games available every day

• Buy • Sell • Swop
• **PLAY**



www.junkmail.co.za

gaming

Your biggest ^ classified community

TEAM FORTRESS 2

MULTIPLAYER BETA



HERE'S A CONTENDER FOR the game with the longest wait before the sequel was actually released. *Team Fortress* was the original *Quake* mod, predating even *ThreeWave CTF*, back in 1996. *Team Fortress 2* was originally announced as a project for *Quake II* back in 1998. About the only contender to top this will be if *Duke Nukem Forever* is actually released someday, since *Duke Nukem 3D* was released in early 1996, a few months before *Quake* and *Team Fortress*.

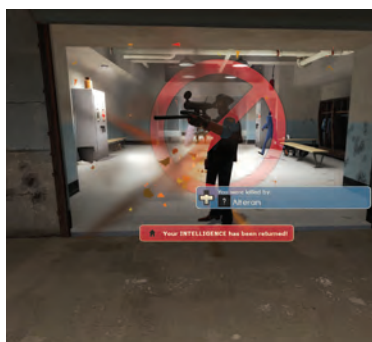
For those who missed this golden era of software-rendered gaming, *Team Fortress* is a team-based multiplayer game with nine different character classes for players to choose from. These range from the fast and

agile Scout to the slow but powerful Heavy Weapons Guy, and include support classes such as the Medic and Engineer. Each class has a unique set of weapons and abilities, which are often designed to complement each other.

The maps may use one of several different gameplay types. Some are capture the flag maps, such as 2Fort where the goal is to infiltrate the enemy base, steal the flag (or other appropriate object), and return it to the starting base. Unlike many CTF games where the flag returns instantly when dropped or touched by a member of its team, the flags in *Team Fortress* tend to stay put for a full minute, forcing the team to defend in a remote location.

Other gameplay types involve capture and hold systems where the goal is to gain control of several points of the map such as Granary, Well, and Gravelpit. These are usually captured by standing on them until they change to the colour of the team, and depending on map design, may all be open at once or may have a lock sequence where only some can be captured at a time to prevent flanking. There are also variants on this such as Hydro, which changes the configuration of the map between rounds.

Unlike many modern class-based team games, *Team Fortress 2* goes for simplicity over complexity. Many fans of quick jump-in-and-play games will likely feel at home





quickly, since there are only three weapons per class, and their uses are pretty obvious. Most classes have a primary weapon, a secondary weapon, and a melee weapon. Some have extra abilities such as the Spy's cloaking device and disguise or the Engineer's build system. But overall, the interface is nice and easy and there's no need to worry about levelling classes to unlock new weapons or abilities. However, Valve has thrown in Achievements for the PC version via Steam, which unlock when you complete specific goals such as beating a time on a map or not losing any control points while on defence.

The cartoonish style fits well with this simplified gameplay model, but is actually a deceptively high-tech rendering and animation system based on Valve's popular Source engine. Originally, *Team Fortress 2* was to be an ultra-realistic combat sim on a next-generation engine that was demoed back in 1999. However, Valve acquired *Counter-Strike*, which filled the realistic team-based shooting game niche quite well, and was more popular. *TF2* was delayed, and the engine it was to use eventually evolved into the Source engine used in *Half-life 2*. However, *Counter-Strike* remained popular and with *CS: Source* it seemed like the two games would be competing for the same fans.

But then, after many years of delay,

Team Fortress 2 resurfaced with a new, very non-realistic design emphasis. The characters now look like something out of *Evil Genius* or *The Incredibles*, with smooth shading resembling cell animation. The animation system has also been used to give them an incredible range of expression and movement, which is generated in real time, based on the conditions in the game. Players laugh, cry, scream with range, and generally react in very amusing ways to the action as it unfolds. Emphasis on realism was stripped away to focus more on a fun gameplay model that would provide a good balance and be easier for new gamers to learn.

Little touches such as the videos showing rough gameplay of the map while at the loading screen round off the experience, and make it much more likely to have a fun game online. Also, the non-combat classes, such as the Engineer and Medic, mean that even those with poor aiming skills (or high pings) can participate equally in a match and be a valuable asset to any team. While some hardcore FPS veterans of games like the *Battlefield* series, *Counter-Strike*, or *Enemy Territory* may find the game simplistic at first, the game balance is actually incredibly deep and well done, and should provide hours of fun and new tactics to learn as they're discovered. **NAG**



RICHARD GARRIOTT'S TABULA RASA

• X ▶ [] [] [] [] [] []

JOIN THE FIGHT

AN EPIC SCI-FI UNIVERSE FROM RICHARD GARRIOTT:

Craft your characters and equip them with a devastating range of weapons and powers

EXPLORE MASSIVE ALIEN WORLDS:

Wrest control over hotly contested control points on dynamic alien landscapes



TAKE ROLE-PLAYING TO THE BATTLEFIELD:

Combine character growth with fast-paced action involving skill, stealth and strategy

UNLEASH THE POWER OF LOGOS:

Learn the alien language and harness the very fabric of the cosmos

WWW.RGTR.COM



megarom
www.megarom.co.za
Tel: +27 11 361 4800
sales@megarom.co.za



PONG IN PICTURES

INSTEAD OF PRINTING RAW source code, like the magazines of yore used to do, we're giving you a series of pictures and a challenge. The challenge is to make Game Maker (obtainable on the DVD) look like this and you'll have yourself a game.

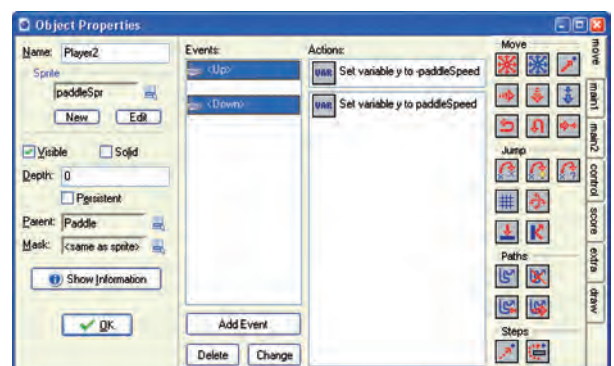
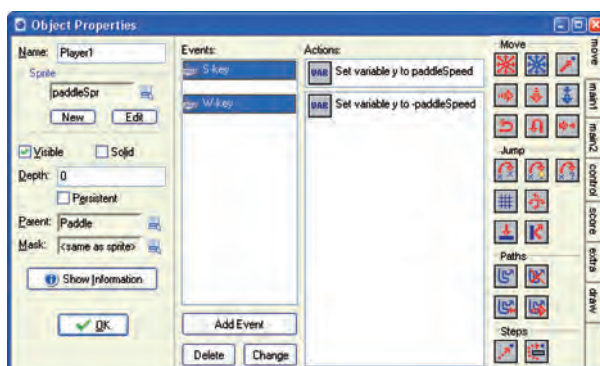
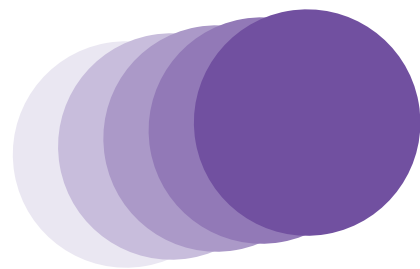
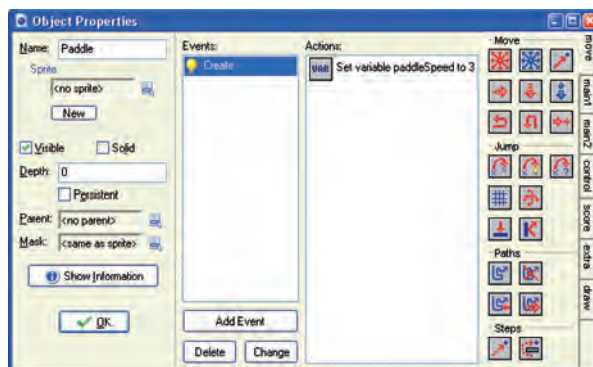
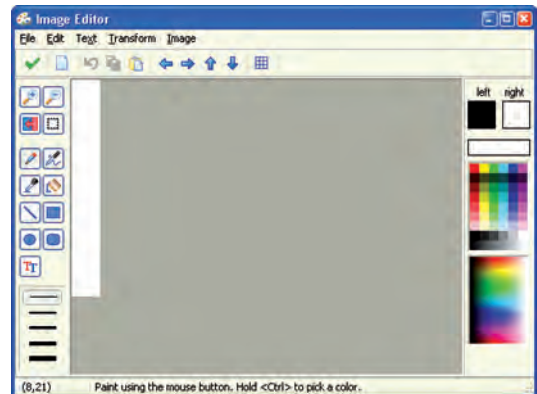
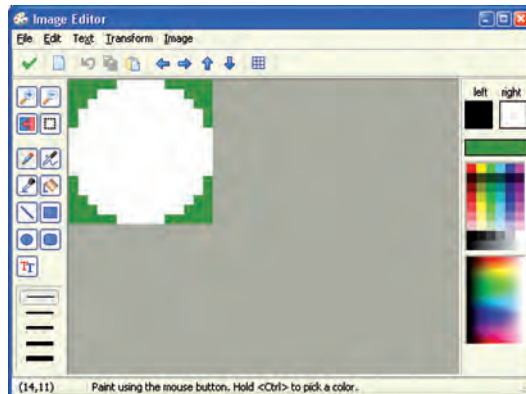
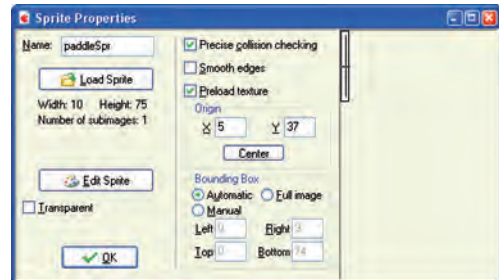
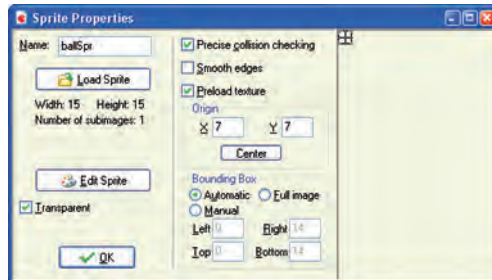
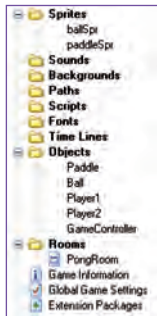
"What game?" You ask? Why, classic PONG of course! Watch out for nifty tricks like

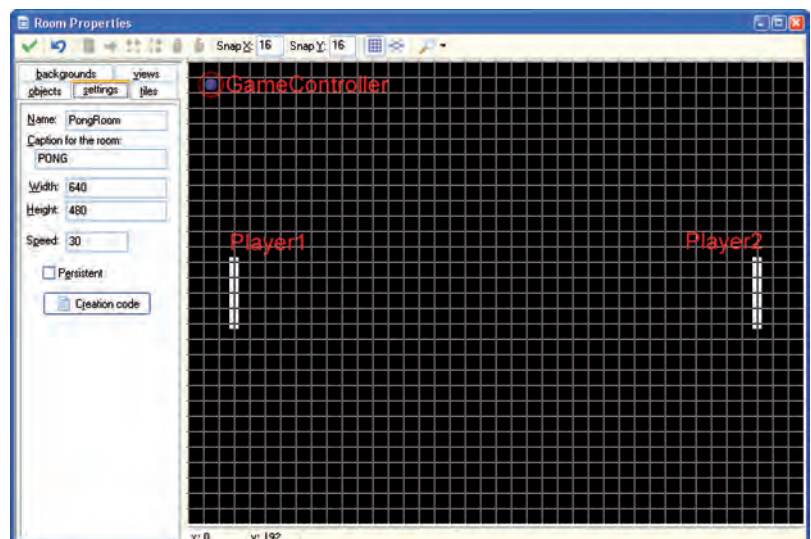
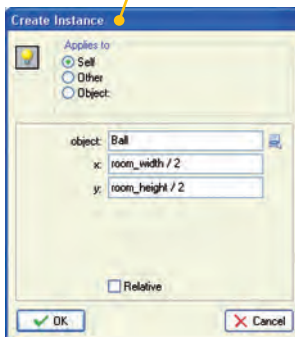
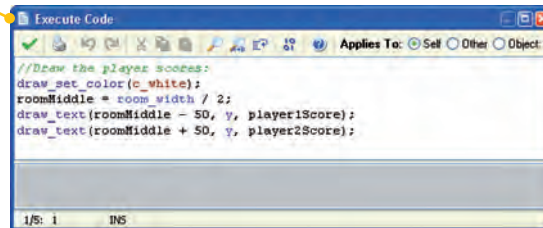
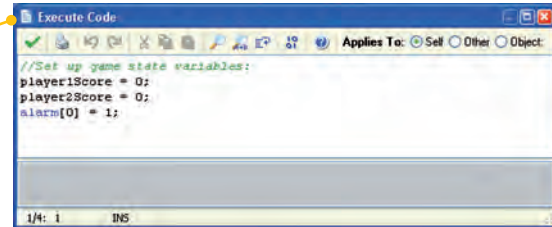
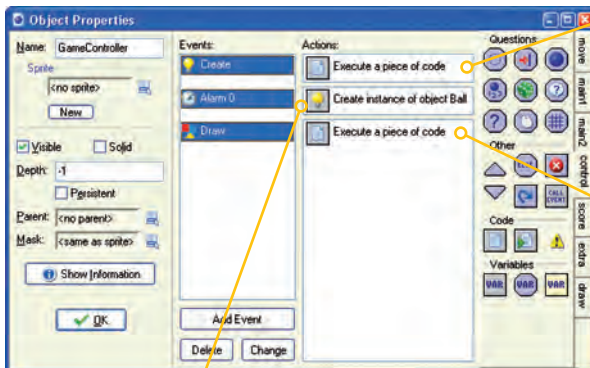
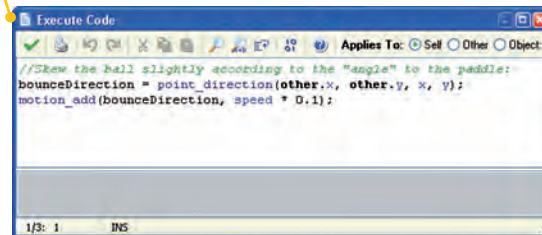
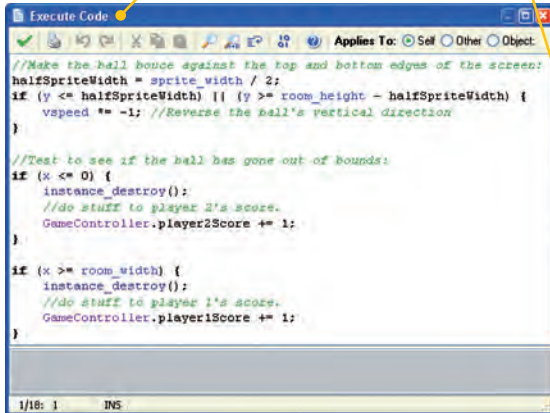
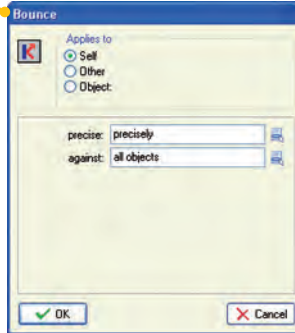
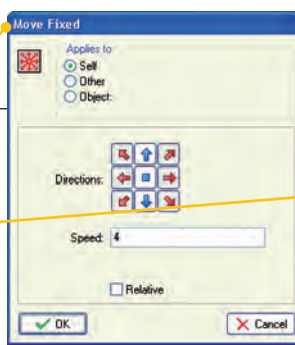
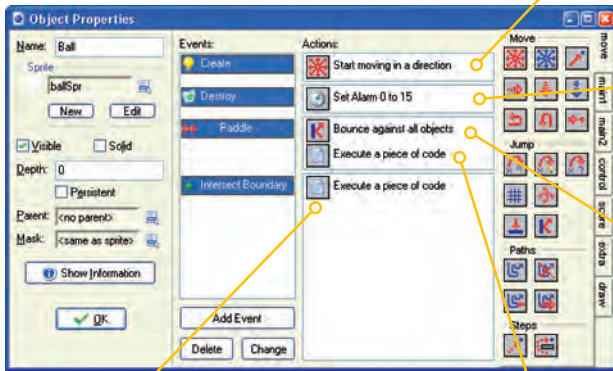
controlling one object from another one (this happens to GameController all the time) and the logic behind how the edges of the paddles deflect the ball more.

Once you're finished, try balancing the game out a little more: Make the paddles reset when the ball re-appears; Add in some classic sounds; Give the game

special effects when the ball bounces; Try creating obstacles to litter around the playing field. Most of all, have fun recreating the masterpiece that created the game industry.

As always, any requests, questions and even criticism will be fielded by the nifty people over at <http://www.gamedotdev.co.za>.





TIBERIUM WARS

MILITARY ACADEMY

TOP OF THE CLASS

PART
3 OF 3

WELCOME BACK, COMMANDER!

In this briefing, we shall be examining intel regarding the Scrin, as well as advanced and, in some cases, subtle general practices. This was originally scheduled to be the last briefing, but the battlefield situation has changed: a fourth briefing, detailing protocols to be followed when engaging in joint operations with an ally against an enemy coalition, will be held next month.

ADVANCED TACTICS

While overall philosophy was covered in the previous briefings, this briefing covers a number of more specific points and situations. As a result, it will be presented in a more staccato, perhaps even disjointed, manner.

Expanding economy: It is usually best to set up your second refinery at your original base, rather than at a nascent expansion. This will ensure that you harvest that field more consistently, and will reduce waits between loads being dropped off. Setting up the second refinery away often results in synchronised harvesting cycles, leading to waits for large 'double-loads' to arrive. Furthermore, fully developing a single resource harvesting point encourages you to defend it properly. While dispersing your assets is generally wise, taking it to extremes results in a non-consolidated infrastructure that is more vulnerable to disruption.

Expansion options: Be sure to quickly assess your options on a given map at start. For example, on Tournament Arena, it is more efficient to 'creep' your base toward your first expansion rather than sending a surveyor or equivalent unit. The money you save can then help accelerate your development, be it economic or military. As another example, on the map Redzone Rampage you start at blue Tiberium – take advantage of this fact (for example, 'crane first' becomes very viable, allowing you to develop both your infrastructure and your technology very quickly).

Reserve cash: Given the way that resources are spent, it can be tricky to hang onto a lump sum that can be spent on a support power. There is a useful way to reserve some cash – pre-build a Tech Centre (this assumes that you are far along into the game for this to be viable) and a high-tech defensive turret. Either of these can be cancelled in a pinch to return the cash immediately. Also, should you actually need to deploy either of these important structures, you won't have to wait for it to be built first. (Tech Centres are high-priority targets, as you may recall.)

Production management: A proper balance of forces is critical, yet it can be very easy to fall prey to switching to high-tech units exclusively once they become available. Avoid this at all costs, as not only will your army's composition become increasingly lop-sided, but you will also suffer in a numerical sense: your army will suffer more from attrition. The best way to handle this is to diversify your production queues. Let us take a simplified example. Say you have two war factories (this is not uncommon, even in the late game, as infantry and air-unit production facilities also need to be maintained in order to maintain unit diversity), once you reach top-tier technology, switch one of them to produce your high-tech units, but keep producing low-tech forces in your other one, cycling through them in whatever ratio you have determined you want at the time. If your economy supports it, you can then build a third war factory and start producing high-tech units there too, increasing the rate at which your powerful units are churned out.

An unconventional view of defences: Despite the fact that you ideally want to set up a complete perimeter around your base and some defences in the heart of your base too, in reality, this is very seldom possible without

sacrificing too much mobility. Therefore, inevitably, there will be fronts where your defences are more dense. Take advantage of this fact by building important structures near there. It is very tempting to build your tech centre or your super weapon as far back as possible, but this actually makes them easier to take out. Rather build them behind but near your front, taking advantage of, for example, storm columns you may have there. (Yes, this may make them somewhat more vulnerable to bombers, so take that into account and defend your airspace accordingly.)

A few notes on the command interface: Your control interface has been designed in such a way to provide options that can seriously improve your commanding efficiency. It has already been stated (in a previous briefing) that you should become as conversant as possible with the shortcuts. One important shortcut is the tilde key, located to the left of '1', which toggles a view that displays all on-screen units' health bars. This helps with targeting damaged units first. Another useful control to remember is reverse-moving tanks when retreating – this will keep frontal armour (which is stronger) facing your enemies, increasing your tanks' chances of getting out of a difficult spot. Holding down both mouse buttons when

A. All health bars on help you choose your targets

B ...and can instantly show you what needs repairing

C...but can be confusing when things get crowded



issuing an order will display the formation preview, which can be dragged in order to deepen or flatten a proposed formation. This helps to keep your troops in some sort of order, spaces them out slightly (thus making them a bit more resistant to splash damage weapons), and helps prevent them getting strung out across the map. There are also unit behaviour ('stance') controls that should be used when appropriate. If you intend to spam an enemy base while you perform a surgical attack (which would require finer micromanagement) elsewhere, you would do well to set the spamming units' stance to aggressive, so that they attack enemy structures without being ordered to. Stealth units tend to be somewhat too passive when cloaked, so it is often advisable to set units like snipers to aggressive should you want them to automatically pick off incoming infantry. Conversely, should you not want your cloaked units to break cover, set them to hold fire so that you can keep your hidden eyes unexposed.

Occupying structures: Never, ever underestimate the power of garrisoned buildings. There is a subtlety to consider here. If you happen to know early on what kind of opponent you are facing (and this should usually be the case through early scouting!), you can determine your garrisoning ratios in advance. For example, when up against Scrin, in the early game it is best to put one rocket and two rifles into a typical building. This will help stave off buzzer rushes, while still discouraging vehicles from getting through. More often, though, you'll be wanting to occupy a building with one rifle and two rockets, or even three rockets. If playing as GDI, it can be worthwhile to place a sniper in the occasional building – this way, buzzers and even black hands and grenadiers are unlikely to get close enough to clear the building.

SCRIN DIRECTIVES

The Scrin's advanced technology is particularly suited to battlefield control. This is true in every stage of the game, and at every technological level. This fact is key to the faction's core philosophy. Scrin's support powers are particularly suited to this task.

Nerve centre technologies: This structure grants access to Lightning Spike and Buzzer Swarm support powers. Both allow you to instantly increase your presence at a location. Either has the potential to swing an engagement by tilting the balance of power.

Stasis shield: This oft-neglected ability can be utterly devastating. While it can be used defensively to shield your units while reinforcements are despatched, it is far more powerful as a means to 'partition' your opponent's army. When in an engagement, you can shut down a portion (say, approximately half) of your opponent's army; now you outnumber the remainder 2-to-1. Then, when the shield wears off, you've gained the upper hand, and still outnumber your enemy.

Reconstruction drones: Used wisely, these can also net a material advantage. Deployed onto friendly units in combat, these drones make your forces tougher. Alternatively, should you win a skirmish, you can pause your units in the field for some repairs, bolstering your strength without having to



return to base, thus more effectively holding ground that you've won from your enemy.

Phase field: This ability is most often used when retreating, as it makes your units invulnerable. However, there are sneakier applications. For example, try assaulting your opponent's front while manoeuvring a small strike force around the flank/rear. Just before entering your opponent's base with this small team, affect it with a phase field. They will now be unable to attack, which will prevent your opponent from being alerted to their base being under attack. It also means that your team will be able to walk right in, ignoring any base defences, and take position by your chosen targets. Once the field wears off, you can attack your selected targets. There is also another application for the phase field: it can provide you with line of sight and presence essentially wherever you want it, meaning that you can deploy a wormhole to the exact location you desire and walk in with annihilator tripods and other troops, for example.

There is too much material regarding the Scrin to cover it all here, but here are a few final words. Annihilator tripods have a little-known ability: up close, their attack includes an EMP wave. The best way to take advantage of this is to split your tripods when attacking a base and use the Alt waypoint system to get them close to their targets before opening fire. In the middle to late game, Scrin's most powerful unit (which may come as a surprise to many) is actually the shock trooper. They deliver incredible impact against any kind of target (for their cost). Bear in mind, however, that this assumes that the plasma disc launchers' upgrade has been researched – without it, the shock troopers are quite unremarkable. **NAG**

MOTHER SHIP MASTER PLAN

The following is a description of a popular trick, which makes it worth knowing both as a possible option and as something to look out for when facing a Scrin opponent. Build a signal transmitter, but don't deploy it. Use the mastermind (an assimilator also works fine) to capture an opponent's building. Make sure that it is a building that provides ground control (a power plant, barracks, or Tiberium silo won't do). Deploy your signal transmitter next to this structure, and then summon the mother ship (of course, this last bit requires 5,000 credits on hand, so plan ahead for this). You can then sell your structures in the enemy's base (an ideal capture target, when possible, is a tech centre, as it yields a good monetary return when sold). Then, get the mother ship to fire at a building, and watch the resulting chain reaction wipe out most, or even all, of the base! Of course, the mother ship can be used conventionally too. With its recent speed upgrade (in Patch 1.07), it is now more viable than it used to be. However, it is still all too common to see one not quite making it to its target. There is, however, a way to carry that catalyst chain reaction across: force fire on one of your units if things are looking dicey, and then rush your units into the enemy base. The chain reaction will jump from unit to unit, and if you get close enough, you'll trigger it in your opponent's buildings.



1. A phased mastermind takes up position near an enemy tech centre

2. ...captures it when the phase wears off

3. Transmitter is placed, mothership deployed

4. then the buildings get sold

5. The mother ship powers up its weapon

6. THE END!



MOVIE NEWS

Grindhouse

Director: Quinton Tarantino, Robert Rodriguez
Cast: Kurt Russell, Rose McGowan, Freddy Rodriguez
Genre: Cult
Release: TBA

TWO OF THE BIGGEST crimes in the world can be associated with this movie. The first big one is that it still has not been released locally. The second is that the powers that be at the studios plan to split *Grindhouse* into two separate DVDs. The practical side of this is easy: *Grindhouse* is a three-hour long tour-de-force from buddies Quinton Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez – the guys who made *Pulp Fiction* and *Desperado* respectively. We've also seen what they can do together, specifically the über-camp, ultra-cheesy and super-gory *Dusk 'till Dawn* and the excellent *Four Rooms*. A grindhouse used to be a type of cinema where two low-budget, B-grade exploitation films were shown back-to-back at a low ticket price. Films here were safe from censorship and could push the envelope. They had to, since nobody was going to watch two intimate family stories back-to-back. Not when there's action, monsters and big-breasted babes to be had!

Grindhouse, thus, is two movies: *Death Proof* and *Planet Terror*. Critics argue over which one is the best, but

the fact is that you should see both and, if watched in its intended format, you will. In-between the two movies are fake trailers made by Rodriguez, Eli Roth (*Hostel*), Rob Zombie (*The Devil's Rejects*) and Edgar Wright (*Shaun of the Dead*). Tarantino helmed *Death Proof*, a story about a crazed stuntman and his 'death proof' 1970 Chevy Nova who goes around and stalks victims in cars, obviously eventually killing them. But when he picks a group of girls as a target in Hollywood, he might have taken on more than he can handle. *Planet Terror* is a zombie-horror courtesy of Rodriguez and tells the story of a go-go dancer and some other unlikely heroes who have to fight off infected people-turned-monsters when a strange plague hits a small town. It features Marilyn Manson's former squeeze, Rose McGowan, as a woman who had to replace her one leg with a machine gun. Yup, high-brow stuff.

So, if you love cinema, especially the edgy, fun type that doesn't take itself or the audience too seriously, *Grindhouse* really looks like what you'll want. Unfortunately, it did poorly in the US, possibly due to the long run time and

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
 *Always Entertaining*

odd scheduling hours. But it already has a cult following and Rodriguez's fake trailer, *Machete*, has already been rumoured to become a full-length movie.

The big question is which will be first: the DVD release or *Grindhouse* appearing at local cinemas. At this stage either are fine, but if it's going to be DVD, keep everything together!





BRUCE WILLIS DIE HARD 4.0



Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem

Director: Greg Strause, Colin Strause
Cast: David Paetkau, John Ortiz, Johnny Lewis
Genre: Action, Horror
Release: December 07

AVP THE MOVIE WAS crap, so crap that a few fans had any interest left at all in the movie series. On top of that, the *Alien* movies have ground to a halt and a *Predator* film has not been around in over a decade. Things were looking bad for two otherwise highly-loved bad guys on the sci-fi circuit, and not a lot of us cared when a sequel to *AVP* was announced. That was until they pointed out that at least one thing will be fixed – instead of the soft PG-13 age restriction that knee-capped *AVP*, *Aliens vs. Predator: Requiem* is going straight for a mature rating. You can thank *300* for that, since that small group of Spartans showed that gore sells and kid-gloves don't mean more money. If there was any doubt left, the new 'red band' trailer for the movie shows plenty of violence, exploding heads, *Predator* weapons dealing great amounts of damage and, of course, *Aliens* ambushing the hell out of military types. The story is still a secret, but it's clear the *Predators* and *Aliens* end up in a small town in the US and proceed to kill everyone, including each other. Eventually, the military wants to nuke the place, while an action-girl with a Ripley cut takes on humanity's fight.



This is definitely a change for both series – even *Predator 2*, set in a city, focused on killing cops and robbers. *AVP* took place in Antarctica and got company people killed. This time it's civilians and hopefully the 'buddy' *Predator* from *AVP* is left out of this one. The trailer looks relentless and we have little doubt that everyone will be on their own in *Requiem*. Now that's exactly what makes a good *Predator* film. A good *Alien* film? Lots of things to kill. Sure, it won't be as classic as the first films, but this might well enter the *Freddy vs. Jason* level of monster royal rumbles that are awesome to watch.

Halloween

Director: Rob Zombie
Cast: Scout Taylor-Compton, Malcolm McDowell, Sheri Moon Zombie
Genre: Horror
Release: TBA

WHAT? IS IT TIME for another horror remake? Already? There has been a lot of action around several horror franchises this year, usually in the form of a new version of the original. The problem with most horrors not made in the past ten years is that they aren't that scary anymore. Move to before 1985 and they have no bite left at all. Original screamers like *Last House on the Left*, *Friday the Thirteenth*, *The Exorcist* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* really only serve as curiosities now. At the very least it will scare toddlers, but the message is clear – if these are to survive and made more money of, they need revamps. It worked for some – *Freddy vs. Jason* kick-started the series again, though its debatable if *Nightmare on Elm Street* would work without Robert Englund. In other cases the remakes were just drab, dull or utterly pointless. A lot of the films started to go for the obvious: put some origins behind the character. That was the angle of the second *Texas Chainsaw* remake, and it reeked. Likewise, *Amityville* was terrible and actually less scary than the



original still is today. But it took a while for the real godfather of slashers, *Halloween*, to get a remake. About time, too, because *H2O* was really bad.

So why be interested in this remake? It does all the abovementioned – goes back to the start, gives us a back story to 'understand' the character' and blankets it all under tons of blood to get to today's harder audience. But it is the work of Rob Zombie, who impressed us to no end with *The Devil's Rejects*. The reviews of the movie in the US Have also been favourable, but the only real reason to watch it will be Zombie's touch. Can he do the same thing he did with *Rejects*? Or will it be the campiness that was *1000 Corpses*?

BUY IT NOW ON DVD

Great DVDs
make **Great GIFTS**
Giving. Getting. Gifting.



Alpha Dog

Director: Nick Cassavetes

Cast: Ben Foster, Justin Timberlake, Bruce Willis

Genre: Action Comedy

Rating: 18L

Score: ★★★★★

THIS IS BASED ON a real story. So real, in fact, that the movie itself stirred some controversy. The main culprit in the story, alleged drug dealer, Johnny Truelove, is currently on trial for the murder of Zack Mazurka, the younger brother of a local thug he was having a problem with. He paid two of his men to kill Zack, but only after they kidnapped him. What makes the case complicated is that until the very end of four days of captivity, Zack didn't know he was going to die and he even got along well with his captors who treated him more like a guest than a hostage. The controversy is that the movie does cast Truelove in a very bad light and the other perpetrators, who currently are serving jail time or awaiting the death sentence, are portrayed in a more sympathetic light.

But that's for the US courts to haggle over. *Alpha Dog* is a solid crime story, telling the story of how the feud came about and what led to Zack's death. It plays off well and the initial feeling that you're just watching a bunch of guys trying to be gangsters quickly flies out of the window. If you like stories about how people screw themselves over,



in particular criminals, *Alpha Dog* is worth it, plus you can catch Sharon Stone and Bruce Willis play

parents. The features only have the making of and the trailer. **JF**

Spider-Man 3

Director: Sam Raimi

Cast: Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, James Franco, Thomas Haden Church, Topher Grace, Bryce Dallas Howard, James Cromwell, Rosemary Harris, JK Simmons

Genre: ComicBook Action

Rating: PG(V)

Score: ★★★★★

HYPE IS A FUNNY thing. Now, bear in mind that a review is largely subjective, and so much of what is to follow is *my opinion*, so don't be irate if you disagree – some of you certainly will! Also, given that this title was a major blockbuster in theatres, many, perhaps even most, of you have already seen it, so I should probably focus more on the DVD package aspect of this product. Anyhow, back to hype. *Spider-Man 3* enjoyed a monumental marketing campaign, which only fuelled people's expectations. Some were rewarded, others

disappointed. I fall somewhat into the second category, though I was blessed by not having built up huge expectations. The movie takes forever to get started, and its flow is constantly interrupted by emotional moments that have been drawn out way too long. In fact, the whole film's beginning and end are too far apart, given the (lack of) substance contained therein. Overall, I felt as though I was watching a soap opera dressed up in spandex, with supposed 'tear-jerker' scenes taking up far too much time. But onward to the DVD pack. The box contains two discs, one with the movie, and the other with the special features. As a result, you can (rightfully) expect a wealth of extra material. There is a blooper/gag reel, extensive galleries (featuring sketches, paintings, special effects photos and even sculptures), a music video, and lots of behind-the-scenes stuff dealing with characterisations



and how certain individual scenes were created. For those who have not seen the movie, I strongly recommend renting it first to decide whether you will enjoy it before buying this pack. However, fans of the movie will get good value in this box, and for those I recommend this product. **AJ**

Beerfest

Director: Jay Chandrasekhar

Cast: Kevin Heffernan, Steve Lemme, Paul Soter, Erik Stolhanske

Genre: Comedy

Rating: 18L

Score: ★★★★★

TWO BROTHERS GO TO Germany, returning their grandfather's ashes to the family burial plot. But they end up at Beerfest, an underground drinking competition where they discover their German cousins, who don't like them for family reasons (the grandfather was bastard offspring). The brothers decide to get back at the hecklers by entering their own team into the Beerfest, so they round up team mates and start training. That involves loads of beer, a bit of tragedy, Jewsihs scientists and why you shouldn't

pick up women when you are drunk.

Obviously, this is not a heavy drama and no one is going to do jogging up stairs. From the beginning to its end, *Beerfest* is a roller coaster of politically incorrect jokes. Actually, that's such a politically correct word. *Beerfest* is a roller coaster of juvenile, low-brow, stupid crap. Naturally it's all awesome. Actually, this could have gone very wrong, but it's really funny. That is, providing you can laugh at foul-mouthed great-grandmothers, frogs being masturbated and loads of beer drinking. Maybe German people should avoid it, because *Beerfest* spares no expense in getting bad accents and pulling every cultural cliché out of the closet with the *lederhosen*. Brilliant stuff. **JF**



Crank

Director: Mark Neveldine, Brian Taylor

Cast: Jason Statham, Amy Smart, Jose Pablo Cantillo, Efrén Ramirez, Dwight Yoakam

Genre: Action

Rating: 16LSV

Score: ★★★★★

WHAT WOULD YOU DO if you had been injected with a poison that inhibits your body's metabolism, eventually stopping all bodily processes due to a lack of adrenalin? Probably dash immediately to a hospital and see what they can do. But for the so-called protagonist of this story, this is not an option – he is a gang-employed hitman, so he avoids official places like that. Furthermore, his temperament dictates that he exact revenge on his killer. Thus, it is that he finds himself on a rampage through the city, just to keep his heart beating till his quest is

done, and the film maintains a fever pitch throughout. Over the course of this hell-bent romp, Statham's character (Chev Chelios) does whatever he can to stay excited and wound up. Despite the grim premise and its unsavoury characters, *Crank* repeatedly delivers dark gallows hilarity, a humour that may at times be sick, but is funny nonetheless. From a visual perspective, this movie provides some interesting cinematography, such as the mixing of freeze-frame, slow-motion, and fast-motion. Use is also made of unusual shots, such as views revealing a beating heart. As a result, much of the time, when not grimly funny, this movie is highly surreal. Sadly, the DVD is lacking in extra features, but at least does allow for the audio to be set up for stereo or 6-channel surround sound. **AJ**



Feast

Director: John Gulager

Cast: Balthazar Getty, Henry Rollins, Navi Rawat, Judah Friedlander, Josh Zuckerman, Jenny Wade, Krista Allen, Clu Gulager

Genre: Horror / Action / Comedy

Rating: 16LV

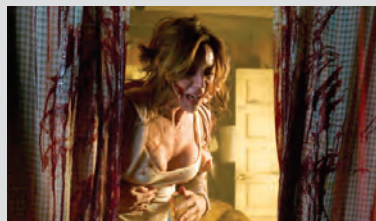
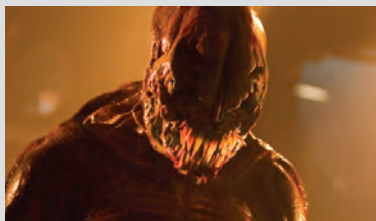
Score: ★★★★★

FEAST IS ONE OF those movies people tend to love or hate, depending on the mood and company of the viewer at the time. Many horror movies are quite funny in the right context, but *Feast* doesn't even try to set up a pretense of being anything other than an over-the-top gore fest with no semblance of a realistic plot or artistic intent. That doesn't mean it's bad, but it caters to a fairly narrow fan base and everyone else may find it terrible.

If you're a fan of this type of genre, this movie will probably be right up your alley. It starts off with a quick introduction of the

motley assortment of characters found in the bar that forms the set of the entire movie, with amusing descriptions including their "life expectancy", and then the action starts. A shotgun-toting hero bursts through the door carrying the severed head of a monster, tells everyone more are coming and they need to fortify the place, and then it's off and running. The rest is a not quite predictable series of improbable deaths with gallons of gore.

Feast was the winner of the third season of *Project Greenlight*, a documentary series founded by Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, and Chriss Moore, designed to show the process of filmmaking. Previous winners include *Stolen Summer* and *The Battle of Shaker Heights*. Supposedly, *Feast 2* and *Feast 3* have been planned and are in production, so for those who liked it, there's more to come. **TH**



DVD's for the fans...



R199⁹⁹

Heroes
Season 1 Part 1
(3 DVD)



R299⁹⁹

Stargate SG-1
Season 1
(5 DVD)
Available From 26 Nov
(Seasons 2 & 3 also available)



R399⁹⁹

Lost
Complete Season 3
(7 DVD)
(Seasons 1 & 2 also available)



R999⁹⁹

Lord Of The Rings
Trilogy Extended Edition
Box Set
(12 DVD)

MANY MORE TITLES AVAILABLE IN STORE



Look & Listen
For the Fans

NAG's preferred gaming retailer.

DVD • CD • GAMES • MP3 • ACCESSORIES

GAUTENG - Fourways: 011 467 1115 • Cresta: 011 476 4142 • Hyde Park: 011 325 4237
East Rand: 011 823 3642 • Irene: **Now Open** Clearwater: 011 675 3648 • Lenasia: 011 852 3231
Atterbury: 012 991 6626 • Menlyn: 012 368 1080 • Greenstone: 011 524 0049
Soweto (Maponya Mall): 011 938 4091 **Now Open** • LIMPOPO - Tzaneen: 015 307 4371 **Now Open**
DURBAN - Pavilion: 031 265 1600 • **NORTH WEST** - Rustenburg: 014 527 3466
MPUMALANGA - Nelspruit: 013 752 4524 • Witbank: 013 492 4530
FREE STATE - Bloemfontein: 051 430 0313 **Now Open** • **WESTERN CAPE** - Caledon: 021 683 1810
Century City: 021 551 4647 • Willowbridge: 021 914 0700 • Worcester: 023 342 1502

Shop online at www.lookandlisten.co.za. Open 'til 10.30pm, 7 days a week.

While stocks last. E&OE. Price and availability subject to change at the discretion of the supplier.



Sunshine

Director: Danny Boyle

Cast: Rose Byrne, Cliff Curtis, Chris Evans, Troy Garity, Cillian Murphy, Hiroyuki Sanada

Genre: Science Fiction

Rating: 16 LV

Score: ★★★★★

It's the year 2057 and the Sun has started to fail. The Icarus project, a massive undertaking using up most of humanity's fissile material to send a thermonuclear payload the size of Manhattan Island to the Sun, is underway. Seven years before, the Icarus 1 was launched on the same mission, but failed for reasons unknown. If the Icarus II fails, life on Earth is doomed. While passing Mercury, the communications officer discovers a distress beacon, that of the Icarus I. A shield rotation mishap forces the crew's hand - their oxygen garden is destroyed in a fire and they must dock with the derelict Icarus I with the hope of finding a replacement supply. By this time, the Icarus II is out of contact with Earth, too close to the Sun to communicate with home.

Director Danny Boyle has a penchant for defining his own style when directing movies (*Trainspotting*, *28 Days Later*) and *Sunshine* is no exception. The stark reality of the film (if you can ignore the many technical and scientific *faux pas* for the sake of enjoying the movie) seems to occupy that interesting middle-ground between the recent *Solaris* and



Event Horizon, not quite one and not quite the other. In terms of the epic undertaking the movie proposes, to reignite the sun, there is a very clear representation of the enormity of such a project with stunning supporting visuals. The movie twists and turns enjoyably, covering the psychology of extended space travel with remarkable aplomb. The cast itself plays remarkably understated characters; professional astronauts and scientists instead of action-movie heroes, giving the film an added air of belief. Later scenes seem to devolve into a quasi-

slasher (if you look at it that way), but one could also consider the final scenes more metaphorical in light of comments made by psych officer Searle earlier in the film - but that may well be personal extrapolation.

It's a stunning movie with a certain crispness in its approach, which fans of the genre might appreciate.

The DVD extras include separate commentaries by Danny Boyle and physicist Dr Brian Cox, a completely useless alternative ending, eleven deleted scenes and Web production diaries. **MD**



Ocean's Thirteen

Director: Steven Soderbergh

Cast: George Clooney; Brad Pitt; Andy Garcia; Al Pacino

Genre: Comedy/Action

Rating: PG

Score: ★★★★★

THIRTEEN TO ONE; THE odds of getting even. The stakes are high, the die is cast. Joker is the name; Poker is the game! It's bolder, riskier and the most daring heist yet. Ocean's back and the target is double-crossing Vegas kingpin, Willy Bank (Pacino). Vegas is awash in brilliant colour, jazz sets the ambiance and Ocean and his bunch of merry men are out for revenge - no lame babes this time. As with *Ocean's 11* and *12*, no rough stuff - heists are supposed to be classy. After all, the backdrop is Bank's posh new casino tower, The Bank - not Monte in Joburg. Out to right a wrong,

revenge for Bank forcing Reuben out of the plans for the flashy new casino and hotel, leaving Reuben physically and mentally incapacitated, the plan is to hurt Bank where it hurts most: his wallet. And just how do you hurt someone like Bank? Make sure his casino/hotel doesn't receive the coveted Five Diamond Award.

Ocean's 13 is a fun comedy thriller with a slick cast. Clooney gives a good performance as the suave Ocean, always dressed impeccably, nodding, raising his brow at appropriate times and leading from the front. Pacino is as good as always, although his role doesn't allow him to act to his full potential.

If you're looking for a classy, fun crime/comedy romp, then *13's* for you.

Special features on the DVD include additional scenes, the producer taking the viewer on a casino



tour, and *Vegas: An Opulent Illusion*, highlighting Vegas' influential design sense. **ND**



Fantastic 4: Rise of the Silver Surfer

Director: Tim Story

Cast: Jessica Alba, Chris Evans, Michael Chiklis, Julian McMahon, Joan Gruffudd

Genre: Comic Book Action

Rating: PGV

Score: ★★★

SEQUEL TO THE 'HIT' family movie, *Fantastic 4* (could you guess?), *Rise of the Silver Surfer* follows the dysfunctional *Fantastic 4* as bendable Reed "Mr. Fantastic" Richards and breast-quota Sue "Invisible Woman" Storm try their best to get hitched while the world goes to hell in a handbasket (to be delivered to planet-eating supercloud Galactus). The Silver Surfer shows up as the herald for Galactus and Dr. Doom plots to use the Surfer's powers for his own gain. Johnny the Human Torch keeps insulting Ben

"The Thing" Grimm who gets upset and tries to punch Johnny, but they eventually resolve their differences and win the day through the power of cooperation.

Look, *Fantastic 4* was never high literature to begin with and the movies follow suit: they're campy, family-orientated popcorn munchers with ooh-aah effects and horrible puns layered atop a feel-good moral message. The DVD contains minimal special features, but does have director commentary and a few extended/deleted scenes. If you like your comic book movies with a bit more pizzazz than *DareDevil* or *Electra*, or if you just want to wash the taste of *Catwoman* out of your mouth - rinse with some *Fantastic 4 haute couture*. The kids certainly dig it. Purists might be upset that Galactus isn't a giant purple man with a funny hat. **MD**



The Best Of BraveStarr

Director: Various
Cast: Various
Genre: Cartoon
Rating: PGV
Score: ★★★★★

STRENGTH OF THE BEAR! Speed of the Puma! Eyes of the Hawk! Ears of the Wolf! You remember BraveStarr - the Marshall sent to the world of New Texas to fight the evil of Stampede and his minions led by villain Tex Hex - and his transforming bio-mechanical large-gun toting horse partner 30-30? If not, you're either too young or too old. *The Best Of BraveStarr* DVD is a two-disc bundle of joy for fans (Volume One of *BraveStarr: The Series* is already out

if you'd rather pursue the complete set) and contains the top five fan-picked episodes and the *BraveStarr: The Legend* feature film that opened the series.

The package contains an in-depth documentary that interviews the creator of *BraveStarr* and other Filmation personnel as well as rare rotoscoping footage, an image gallery and other bits and pieces. This package comes from Ink & Paint, who are quickly establishing themselves as a quality source for older cartoons - their *Complete Dungeons & Dragons Animated Series* collection is an absolute masterpiece in terms of the time and effort they put into the product - and this *Best Of BraveStarr* is no exception. Fans will love this and newcomers may be intrigued by the setting: cowboys, Indians and bandits in space in the future! **MD**



The Descent

Director: Neil Marshall
Cast: Shauna Macdonald | Natalie Mendoza | Alex Reid | Saskia Mulder | MyAnna Buring | Nora-Jane Noone
Genre: Thriller
Rating: 16V
Score: ★★★★★

SIX WOMEN ENTER A cave and things go wrong. In the claustrophobic dark, strange creatures appear and a fight for survival ensues. It's a simple plot but the execution of the intense downward spiral into oblivion is something to behold. The movie feels authentic and a lot of the character development is smartly handled by implication, underlying issues between the women and

a few off-handed comments effectively set the scene, tone and build tension. The director and actors must be commended for staying true to their characters right to the end with a vividly tangible interpretation of what might happen when fear and panic take control. Thankfully, the movie doesn't devolve into a fairytale, nor does anyone suddenly become Jane Rambo, although the final minute or so of the film was snipped for USA audiences (a travesty). Fortunately, the version on sale here is the UK version. It's a severe experience that doesn't release the tension for a second and will leave you exhausted. The blurb on the box reads, "The best horror-thriller since *Alien*." This might be a little like comparing zombies



to vampires, but it's not too far off the mark. The only disappointing part of the package is the lack of special features on the DVD (no wait; there is a 'setup' menu); a classic like this deserves a little more love and attention. In fact, see if you can get your hands on the unrated widescreen version - it's got a few extras and the words 'unrated version' demand some investigation. Don't watch this if you're planning any caving soon, but for the rest of you, highly recommended. **MJ**

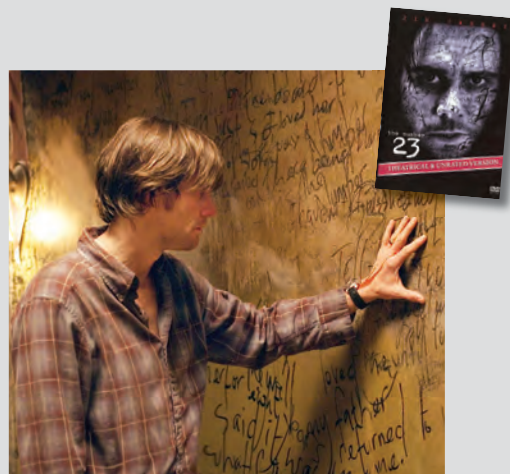
The Number 23

Director: Joel Schumacher
Cast: Jim Carrey, Virginia Madsen
Genre: Thriller
Rating: 16VS
Score: ★★★

WALTER SPARROW'S LIFE IS about to take a turn for the worst. When he runs late to meet his wife, she finds a book in a second-hand store called *The Number 23*. He starts reading it and soon finds similarities between it and his own life. He also starts to find the number 23 everywhere - in his name, his address, his social security number. Everywhere. As he reads the book, he can't figure out if he's going insane or if there is something else at work. His wife, though, does worry about his mental wellbeing. She should. He's thinking thoughts of murder.

Jim Carrey has been having a hard time getting credit from audiences for doing other stuff than comedy. This is another attempt and it's not half bad (though not in the same league as *Eternal Sunshine*). The real issue is director Joel Schumacher, who can do great work but sometimes doesn't quite get it together. One example of that was *8mm*, where things were good, but not completely tight. *The Number 23* suffers from this same problem, so it's a good thriller, but doesn't bring things together at the end. Still, the whole thing plays off nicely and is entertaining.

The DVD is feature-rich and it contains both theatrical and unrated versions. But the latter isn't that bad, so who knows why they cut it down. If you liked the film, the DVD is well worth it. **JF**



The Hills Have Eyes 2

Director: Martin Weisz
Cast: Michael McMillian, Jacob Vargas, Jessica Stroup
Genre: Horror
Rating: 16LV
Score: ★★

AFTER THE FAMILY FROM the first movie got slaughtered and the survivors managed to take most of the mutants out, the army sets upon the parched piece of desert where the killers stay. If you haven't seen the first movie, the residents of a small town in the middle of where US nuclear tests took place mutated into a bunch of cretins through the generations and have taken to killing people

who stumble upon their deserted area. This time, the scientists installing surveillance equipment are picked off and when a bunch of army trainees arrive to drop of equipment, they become the next targets. Lots of killing, creepy moments and scary crap ensues. Originally a Wes Craven movie (involving a wild child's offspring instead of nuclear mongrels), the recent remake made a lot of money thanks to following Craven's film tightly and adding loads of chunky bits flying all over the place. This sequel keeps the 'squeem' factor, but abandons any real semblance of the original plot. It becomes a standard slasher where the teen-like victims get picked off. If they acted like they were actually trained in an army, this could have



been interesting. Instead it's slow on good ideas and hardly carries all the way. **JF**

Superman: The Animated Series (Volume One)

Director: Various
Cast: Various
Genre: Animated
Rating: A
Score: ★★★★★

SUPERMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES originally aired from 1996 to 2000, ten years after the 1986 'reboot' of the Superman comic book character. The series pays tribute to both the classic Superman of old and the newer, more modern Superman of which the most significant change is the more aggressive personality of Clark Kent. Kent's interactions with Lois are also taken up a notch; the two practically compete in their careers for the Daily Sun. The series even modernized the origin story of *Superman*, showing a dying Krypton betrayed by Braniac, an AI the Kryptonians trusted. The entire series features fresh reincarnations of practically the entire villain menagerie as well as a very riveting and ruthless Lex Luthor, menacingly voiced by actor Clancy Brown who was Victor Kurgan in the original *Highlander* movie and the voice of Mr. Krabs in *SpongeBob Squarepants*.

Fans of the animated series will no doubt enjoy collecting this series while people who missed the original run may want to pick this up: it truly is the best animated representation of Superman.

This two-disc volume contains 18 episodes with select commentary on four-key episodes



(The Last Son of Krypton, Stolen Memories, The Main Man and Tools of the Trade) by series creators. There is also a selectable pop-up



Trivia Track for the fans and a featurette "Superman: Learning to Fly", which explores the creation of the series. **MD**

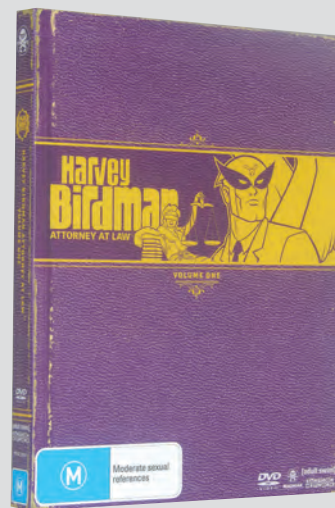
Harvey Birdman: Season 1

Director: Ben Jones
Cast: Gary Cole, Stephen Colbert, Thomas Allen
Genre: Comedy, Animation
Rating: 13
Score: ★★★★★

REMEMBER BIRDMAN AND THE Galaxy Trio? Of course not – you'd have to have grown up in the US during the Seventies to even have a clue what we're talking about. So obviously, neither do we. But you do know other Hanna-Barbera stuff like *The Flintstones* and *Scooby Doo*. After getting the rights to those characters, this show went on to turn everything on its head. It's quite a few years after Birdman's hey-day and he is now a lawyer at legal firm Sebben & Sebben. Here, with the help of his sidekick eagle and the sociopath clerk, Peanut, Birdman must take on top cases, defending them against former enemies like Reducto and Freezoid who have become lawyers as

well. This is important work and serious law: Birdman had to settle the custody battle between 'life partners' Professor Quest and Race Bannon over Johnny Quest, help get Shaggy and Scoobie Doo off the hook for allegedly smoking a joint and get in with the mob as he helps Fred Flintstone in what was a very fine *Sopranos* parody. In between all of this is some of the best and most inane humour that Adult Swim has delivered.

The first season debuted back in 2000, but there's no reason not to get this box-set. It features 12 episodes as well as a few nice special features. But the real reason you want this is to hit 'Play All' and leave it running in the background. *Harvey Birdman* still remains one of the funniest, most surreal and ridiculous shows ever aired on Adult Swim – yes, we're counting *Aquateen*. Brilliant stuff. **JF**



Takeshi Kitano box-set

Director: Takeshi Kitano
Cast: Various
Genre: Crime, Drama
Rating: 18
Score: ★★★★★

YOU MIGHT KNOW TAKESHI Kitano better than you think. The widest exposure his films have had in the West was the hard-edged *Brother*, a tale of a disgraced Yakuza who flees to America and joins his kid brother to create a strong criminal enterprise. If you've watched that film and enjoyed it a lot, you really must see the rest of his movies. Kitano is one of the brightest stars of the Japanese film scene and his career spans back decades. He started as a comedian, but his later works are all gritty and violent movies that tend to explore the criminal underworld

of Japan. Kitano has a fondness for stories either about the Yakuza or hardcore cops, but without all the fancy trappings that an action movie would bring. Instead, films like *Boiling Point* and *Hanabi* (Fireworks) show stark contrasts: beautiful shots and deep dialogue between interesting characters – punctuated by acts of extreme and realistic violence. He also tends to star in his own movies under the name of Beat Takeshi and while we usually frown at a director doing this, Kitano is foremost an actor and he plays his roles with great power. A perfect example of his acting was as the teacher in *Battle Royale*. This box-set bring together three of his great movies and is an excellent launching pad to his work. If you enjoyed Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*, Kitano's films will be right up your alley. **JF**



Harry Potter

AND THE
ORDER
OF THE PHOENIX™



WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENTS
A HEYDAY FILMS PRODUCTION "HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX" DANIEL RADCLIFFE RUPERT GRINT EMMA WATSON STARRING HELENA BONHAM CARTER ROBBIE COLTRANE
WARWICK DAVIS RALPH FIENNES MICHAEL GAMBON BRENDAN GLEESON RICHARD GRIFFITHS JASON ISAACS GARY OLDMAN ALAN RICKMAN FIONA SHAW MAGGIE SMITH IMELDA STAUNTON
DAVID THEWLIS EMMA THOMPSON JULIE WALTERS COSTUME DESIGNER JANY TEMIME SCORE BY NICHOLAS HOOPER EDITED BY MARK DAY PRODUCTION DESIGNER STUART CRAIG DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SLAWOMIR IDZIAK EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LIONEL WIGRAM
SCREENPLAY BY MICHAEL GOLDENBERG BASED ON THE NOVEL BY J.K. ROWLING PRODUCED BY DAVID HEYMAN DAVID BARRON DIRECTED BY DAVID YATES



HARRY POTTER characters, names, and related indicia are trademarks of and © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Harry Potter Publishing Rights © J.K. Rowling. © 2007 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.



BUY IT NOW ON DVD

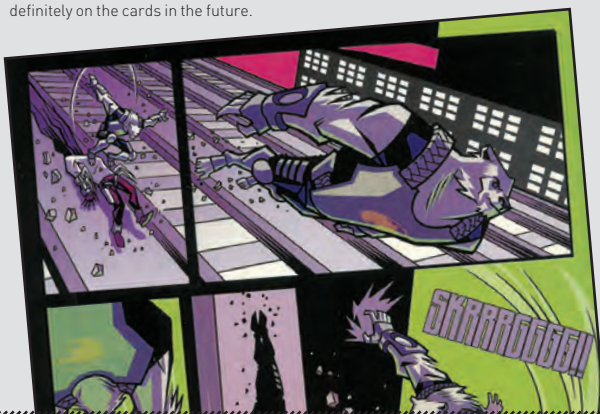
COMICS

Written by Clive Burmeister

The Astounding Wolf-Man (#3)

Format: Comic Series (Bi-monthly)
Publisher: Image
Writer: Robert Kirkman
Artist: Jason Howard
Price: R24.50

Robert Kirkman, writer of the hugely popular series' *The Walking Dead* and *Invincible*, started his new series, *The Astounding Wolf-Man* at the international Free Comic Book Day (at the beginning of May) with an awesome first issue that was free. The second issue had legions of fans already lining up to purchase it and the third follows suit. If you've never read a Kirkman comic, do yourself a favour and start. His unique concepts and story-telling styles let the reader become totally wrapped up in the book, and it's almost a shame when you come to the end of an issue. *The Astounding Wolf-Man* is no different, ending each issue with a cliffhanger; Kirkman brings a 'real' essence and feeling to rather 'unreal' characters. *The Astounding Wolf-Man* is also set in the "Invincible" universe, so a crossover is definitely on the cards in the future.



Criminal Macabre Volume 4 - Two Red Eyes

Format: Graphic Novel
Publisher: Dark Horse
Writer: Steve Niles
Artist: Kyle Hotz
Price: R114.95

Cal McDonald's life has hit a few speed bumps recently. Big bumps. Speed bumps the size of King Kong. Super-sized. Cal is a low-life private detective who is totally wrapped up in the supernatural. Surrounded by it. His best friend is a ghoul! Now, his girlfriend has just dumped him and moved away, and the cops are out to ruin him after his association with a cop who died because of him. And they're not the only ones. Now an ancient evil from the old world is also after him. How can things get any worse? Well they do, because while he's in hospital recovering from a police beating, he goes through withdrawal, and now he has to deal with this big mess sober! Niles tells an entertaining story, and Hotz captures it perfectly. Oh, and it has the best death of an 'ancient evil' I've ever seen...



Origin

Format: Graphic Novel
Publisher: Marvel Comics
Writer: Bill Jemas, Joe Quesada, Paul Jenkins
Artist: Andy Kubert (pencils), Richard Isanove (colour)
Price: R149

The complete six-issue comic book limited series (published from November 2001 to July 2002), in one, *Origin* details the early days of X-Men superhero, Wolverine, a character whose past has been shrouded in mystery since the early 1970s. The series reveals much, including that Wolverine was born James Howlette, the son of a rich plantation owner in the late 19th Century Canada, and that he was a sickly child, plagued by various allergies. His father, John, brings an orphaned girl named Rose up from the town to be James's companion. The two befriend the child of cruel groundskeeper, Tomas Logan (who looks like the adult Wolverine), Dog Logan, whom they often played with during their childhood. The bittersweet past of Wolverine is stunningly depicted and executed in this reluctant tale (in the introduction, some of those who worked on the series express their dismay at revealing the actual origins of possibly one of the comic book world's most popular and covert characters). The artwork is stunning in the traditional Kubert style, but the dialogue is what really holds the entire production together. The characters are solid, believable and exceptionally well conceived; their motivations, nuances and eventual outcomes masterfully crafted, as is expected from such a highly-anticipated and potentially-disastrous production. Long-term Wolverine fans who have yet to discover his origins won't want to miss this.



Batman: The Dark Knight Returns

Format: Graphic Novel
Publisher: DC
Writer: Frank Miller
Artist: Frank Miller, Klaus Janson, Lynn Varley
Price: R149

It has been ten years since Bruce Wayne donned the Dark Knight's cape and started keeping Gotham city safe from all the crime rotting it. But Bruce can't help but feel hollow, as if he's not complete without the cape and tights. At the same time, he has to fight the demons of his parents' and Robin's deaths. Meanwhile, Commissioner Gordon is nearing retirement and Harvey Dent has been released from the asylum after his alter ego of Two Face was cured. But Dent disappears and Gotham is under the siege of a violent gang called The Mutants. Bruce sees no other choice - he has to become Batman again, before he goes mad. But things aren't that easy. The new commissioner isn't pro-vigilante and Batman's arch-nemesis, the Joker, is planning to get out of Arkham as well. On top of that, it's ten years later and Bruce isn't the strong crusader he used to be. This collection covers Frank Miller's first look at the Dark Knight and was originally published in 1986. It took fans back to the darker side of this hero and introduced a new wave of grittier comic books since its appearance. Written and illustrated by Miller, it remains one of his best pieces of work and is a must-read for Batman fans and people looking for a graphic novel that doesn't insult their intelligence.





Punisher Max Annual #1

Format: Comic Annual
Publisher: Marvel Max
Writer: Mike Benson
Artist: Laurence Campbell
Price: R32.95

The first annual in the *Marvel Max Punisher* series hits the shelves with this standalone story, told from the point of view of a criminal on the run from the relentless vigilante known as The Punisher. "Every action has a price." And now Eddie Gands, a lowlife leader of a law-breaking crew-for-hire has to learn that lesson the hard way. Written and illustrated with the usual violent, in-your-face, kind of style we've come to expect from the *Punisher* Max series, this is a good read, putting you right there next to Eddie as he runs for his life through the dark and filthy city. *Marvel Max* is a mature line of comics with explicit content and language, but could any 'real' Punisher story be told any other way?



52 Volume 1 (of 4)

Format: Graphic Novel
Publisher: DC
Writer: Various
Artist: Various
Price: R164.95

52 was the biggest DC comic event this year, telling the story of how the DC universe would change after the cataclysmic battle between the combined heroes and villains of the world. Afterwards, in the dust and ash of a world recovering, the three greatest champions for good, Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman have withdrawn from the spotlight to recover. Now, this "New World's" heroes must face the future without these icons to lead them. 52 was originally told in weekly comics, spanning 52 weeks, but will now be available in four graphic novels combining all the issues, as well as extra artwork and write-ups by the writers involved. With some of the big names in comics, like Grant Morrison and Keith Giffen, 52 is definitely a story you could become engrossed in.



Wanted

Format: Graphic Novel
Publisher: Top Cow
Writer: Mark Millar
Artist: JG Jones, Paul Mounts
Price: R149

Wesley Gibson is really a miserable loser of a character. He orders a salmon and wasabi-mayonnaise sandwich every day just to be different. His girlfriend is cheating on him left, right and center, including with his best friend. His boss hates his guts and he has a terrible job. People make fun of his clothes and he constantly looks for new illnesses to blame his neurosis on. Life sucks for Wesley Gibson and it is all really his fault for not taking charge of things. But then he inherits his runa-way dad's fortune. His dad also happened to have been The Killer, a major super-villain, and in his will he stipulates that Wesley has to take his place, shape up and get tough if he wants the money. In steps The Fraternity, a secret organisation of super-villains who control the world. Suddenly Wesley's life is different: he's rich, he's a skilled killer and he has the respect of a group of super-humans. But things are never that simple, are they? Top Cow's take on super-villains and the world Gibson enters is a very adult, very well written and illustrated piece of work by Frank Millar (*X-Men*) and JG Jones (*Y: The Last Man*). Apart from being visually stunning, the story explores mature themes and deeper ideas. This is another excellent example of superheroes (or villains) being used in a new and refreshing way that seems more real. A movie is in the works for this and we can see why. Get *Wanted* now!



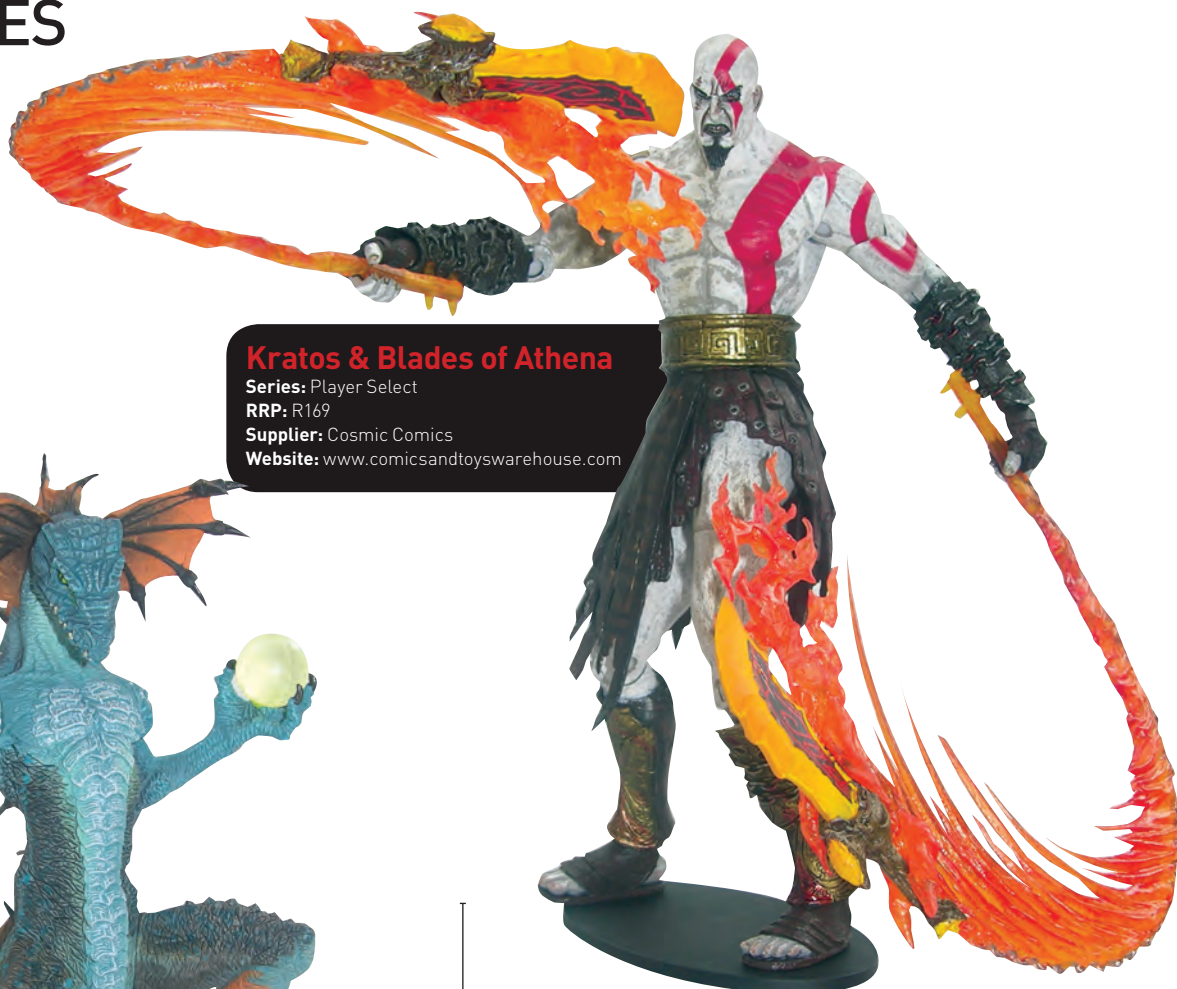
The Immortal Iron Fist

Format: Ongoing Series
Publisher: Marvel Comics
Writer: Ed Brubaker, Matt Fraction
Artist: David Aja
Price: R25

The Iron Fist character was originally created by Roy Thomas and Gil Kane to cash in on rising martial arts popularity and first appeared in *Marvel Premiere* #15 back in 1974. Started in 2006, *The Immortal Iron Fist* is a new series and began as a six-part drama titled *The Last Iron Fist Story*. The story begins by revealing that the Iron Fist is a legacy power, conferred on the champion of K'un Lun once a generation. Stretching back in time as far as the 13th century, there have been sixty-six Iron Fists. *The Last Iron Fist Story* is an action-packed martial arts drama filled with metaphorical undercurrents and a rich tapestry of converging plot threads. Orson Randall, the newest Iron Fist, not only has to fight for his legacy and destiny, but also needs to ensure the continued success of his multi-billion-dollar empire. When the previous Iron Fist, who was believed to be dead suddenly reappears, tapping into the same power that Randall does, everything goes to hell in a kung-fu handbasket, and suddenly Randall has to fight far more than he was ever prepared for. The art by Spanish artist, David Aja, is both gritty and unique, emphasising form and fluidity over detail. Fans of high-octane martial arts and composite storytelling should get a kick out of this ongoing series.

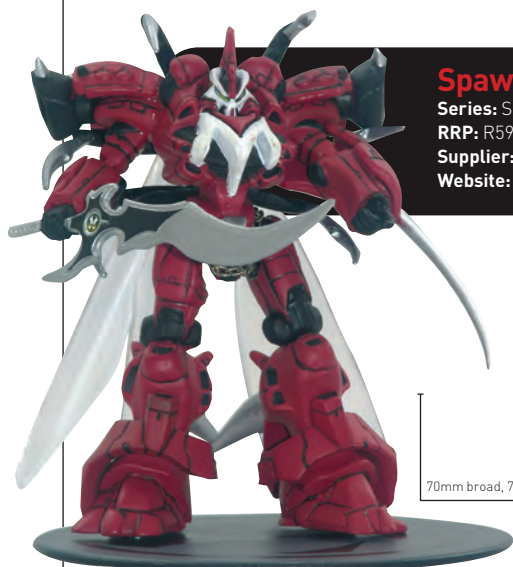


FIGURINES

**Kratos & Blades of Athena****Series:** Player Select**RRP:** R169**Supplier:** Cosmic Comics**Website:** www.comicsandtoyswarehouse.com

140mm broad, 190mm tall

160mm broad, 240mm tall

**Sorcerer Dragon****Series:** McFarlane's Dragons Series 5**RRP:** R189**Supplier:** Cosmic Comics**Website:** www.comicsandtoyswarehouse.com**Spawn Trading Figures****Series:** Series 2**RRP:** R59**Supplier:** Cosmic Comics**Website:** www.comicsandtoyswarehouse.com

70mm broad, 70mm tall

**Hartigan****Series:** Frank Miller's Sin City**RRP:** R95**Supplier:** Cosmic Comics**Website:** www.comicsandtoyswarehouse.com

145mm broad, 180mm tall



TO ENTER,
SIMPLY **SMS**
THE KEYWORD
DIEHARD4.0
TO 34110

WIN!

ONE OF TEN COPIES OF DIE HARD 4.0 ON DVD

SMSes are charged at R2 each
Competition closes 1 December 2007
Winners will be notified by phone



Prizes kindly sponsored by Nu Metro Home Entertainment



RAVEN'S LOFT BIG, NASTY CREATURES AT RAGE



BY THE TIME YOU read this, the Lorwyn set will likely be old hat to you, but the pre-release at rAge has just happened as this is being written. And the Johannesburg heat took place at our very own rAge expo. Now, prior to the event, a couple of players had expressed to me their concern that *Magic: The Gathering* may be dying in this country. I was somewhat sceptical, particularly in light of the fact that the 10th Edition pre-release at ICON had drawn over 120 players, but kept an open mind. Well, my feeling was confirmed when, after some difficulties with the Lorwyn stock getting through Customs, it finally arrived and the organisers found that the turnout was close to double what they had expected! Some 127 players ended up participating in the event, requiring the Coca-Cola Dome's management to rustle up additional tables. Unfortunately, the delays resulted in too few rounds being played (due to time constraints, everyone had to vacate the rAge main event floor at closing time), and so there were seven players tied for first place (yours truly among them). Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the event was enjoyable, and the organisers rewarded players' patience with a bonus booster pack per player once the tournament was over.

So what is Lorwyn all about? Preliminary looks at the spoiler lists suggested that the format would be dominated by creatures on steroids. While the creatures do seem, on the whole, to provide more bang for your (mana) buck, the control elements that are present allow them to be offset somewhat. The 'power creep', however, is some cause for concern, as many Lorwyn creatures offer a lot more in terms of power/toughness and abilities for their mana costs than older creatures, which raise the following two questions: (1) Will older cards become obsolete, perhaps even detracting from the Extended tournament format?; (2) Is Wizards of the Coast trying to milk the market for all it's worth by constantly printing 'must-have' new cards that players cannot play competitively without?

ONE OF THE TRIBE(S)

Lorwyn, for those of you unfamiliar with the set, has a tribal theme (in other words, creature types matter). As a result, many cards feature tribal synergies, while some boast tribe-hosing abilities. An important cycle is the Harbingers. These are printed at uncommon level, and provide each tribe with a way to search out a specific tribal card. Interestingly enough, while I mention above that "creature types matter," tribal types are not limited to creature cards – there are elf enchantments, merfolk sorceries, and shapeshifter instants, for example. Harbingers allow such cards to be 'tutored up' to the top of the library. Shapeshifters are interesting in that they have all tribal/creature types, so they can be fetched with any Harbinger! On the flip-side, however, they are vulnerable to all tribal hosers.

INCARNATIONS

An interesting cycle of rare creatures in Lorwyn is the very powerful Elemental Incarnations: Purity, Guile, Dread, Hostility, and Vigor, for white, blue, black, red, and green, respectively. These are all 6/6 creatures with some or other keyword for six mana (three of them coloured). In addition, they each have the ability, "When this card would be put into a graveyard from anywhere, shuffle it into its owner's library," and one more, and powerful, ability. I look forward to seeing how much impact these will have on the tournament scene.

LOOKING AHEAD

Wizards of the Coast has announced the name and logo for the set to follow Morningtide (the second set in the Lorwyn block). It will be called Shadowmoor, and its logo suggests that it will have a somewhat darker, perhaps even gothic, look and feel. It is scheduled for release early next May.



SCRYING THE SYNERGIES

This month, instead of examining a synergy, let us take a look at how to break a specific one up. A mechanic introduced in Lorwyn is champion. This is an 'evolution' mechanic that essentially allows one creature to turn into another. Most champion creatures require a card of a specific tribe to be in play, which is then removed from the game and which returns to play should the champion card leave play. Some (notably shapeshifter champions) can champion any creature. The former are quite vulnerable to a nasty trick, the latter slightly less so. Let us consider the Changeling Titan: a 7/7 creature for five mana that requires you to champion a creature when it comes into play. If, in response to the Titan being played, you deprive your opponent of any creatures to champion, that player will be forced to sacrifice the Titan when it resolves, as it will lack a creature to champion. Alternatively, such as in the case of the very 'soft' Nova Chaser (which has power/toughness of 10/2), you can respond to the champion trigger by killing the champion creature. It then leaves play before the champion trigger resolves. This trigger's resolution will cause the 'championed' creature to be removed from the game – permanently, as the Nova Chaser (for example) is no longer in play, and cannot leave play to trigger the champion target's 'return to play' trigger. These are nifty tricks that can result in a 'two-for-one' trade: one removal spell to kill two creatures.

NAG

Alex Jelagin



MAGIC

The Gathering®

TRADING CARD GAME

OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTORS IN
SOUTH AFRICA



magic@icon.co.za

www.geon.co.za

SUBSCRIBE & WIN

**The first ten subscribers
will receive a copy of Kane &
Lynch: Dead Men for PC plus a
T-shirt from Nu Metro!**



Prizes sponsored by



SUBSCRIBE TO NAG FOR R380 AND SAVE 20%

Full Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Age: _____ Cellular: _____

Home Tel: _____ E-mail: _____

Payment Method:

Bank deposit ☐ Cheque ☐ Postal order ☐ Visa/Mastercard ☐

For Credit Card Payment only:

Credit card number: _____

Expiry date: _____ CVV number: _____

Signature: _____

Bank Account details:

[use these details when depositing money into
our bank account]

Tide Media - Nedbank Fourways
Account Number: 1684 112 117
Branch Code: 168 405

Once you have paid the money into our account, fax
a copy of the subscription form plus the bank deposit
slip to 0111 704-4120. No deposit slip = no subscription.

Please make cheques and postal orders out to Tide Media
and then post the completed form to
NAG Subscription Department, P.O. Box 237, Olivedale, 2158

For further information, please contact the
subscription office on

0111 704-2679 from 09:00 - 15:00,
e-mail subs@tidemedia.co.za or fax 0111 704-4120

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

Please note that all outlined subscription rates and offers are only valid for postal addresses in South Africa. If you live outside the borders of South Africa and would like to receive the magazine on a monthly basis, please contact the subscriptions department on subs@tidemedia.co.za directly for pricing.

NB!!!!
10th year
give away
10 of these
must go

& 100 gb adsl
bandwidth
to go as well



sign up for either



adsl
from R49/month



hosting
from R21.66/month



dial-up
from R49/month

and you could be a winner

since 1997
imagnet

www.imagnet.co.za





TEAM FORTRESS 2

Unreal TOURNAMENT



PLAYSTATION 3

PC DVD
ROM



MIDWAY

Unreal Tournament © 3 2007 Epic Games, Inc. All rights reserved. MIDWAY and the Midway logo are registered trademarks of Midway Amusement Games, LLC. Used by permission. UNREAL, UNREAL TOURNAMENT and the Epic Games logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Epic Games Inc. Used by Permission. Distributed under licence from Epic Games, Inc. by Midway home Entertainment Inc. "PLAYSTATION", and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc Software platform logo (TM and ©) IEMA 2006.

ASUS recommends Windows Vista™ Home Premium



Mobile Warrior



Let's GAME

Powerful High-Speed Performance for Virtual Enjoyment Anywhere

The ASUS G1 and G2 notebook series redefine mobile gaming with advance graphics solutions, exclusive display technologies and unique design details. With Direct Flash sidelights, gaming spirit is shared when DirectX 9 support is activated for graphic intense moments. Get a boost and bring the game on anywhere! ASUS G1 and G2 are powered by Intel® Centrino® Duo Mobile Technology.



ASUS Direct Messenger
Information side display updates IM, system status and reminder alerts with zero distraction.



Gaming Hot Keys
The A, W, S and D key are especially marked for convenient access at one glance.



Wireless Video Communication
Built-in high-resolution webcam and speaker allows wire-free video conferencing anywhere without the hassle of tangling wires.



Suit of Armor
The in-mold decorated cover surface provides sturdy protection to the LCD screen and also prevents the paint from chipping off.



G1 Gaming Package (G1 + Backpack + Mouse)



G2 Gaming Package (G2 + Backpack + Mouse)

Gaming Notebook Series- G1/G2

- Intel® Centrino® Duo Mobile Technology
 - Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor T7600/T7400/T7200/T5600/T5500
 - Mobile Intel® 945PM Express Chipset
 - Intel® PRO/Wireless 3945ABG Network Connection
- Genuine Windows® Vista®
 - Genuine Ultimate
 - Genuine Home Premium
- NVIDIA GeForce Go7700 512 Physical VRAM(G1); ATI Mobility® Radeon™ X1700 512 MB Physical VRAM(G2)
- DDRII 533/667MHz, up to 2GB
- 15.4" WXGA/WSXGA+ (G1); 17" WXGA+(G2); Color Shine LCD
- ASUS Video Intelligence Technology
- SATA 80/100/120/160 GB HDD
- DVD Super-Multi with Light Scribe
- Built-in 1.3 mega-pixel webcam

ASUS®
Rock Solid · Heart Touching

rectron
www.rectron.co.za

Johannesburg:
Tel: (011) 203 1000
Fax: (011) 203 1135

Cape Town:
Tel: (021) 555 7136
Fax: (021) 555 7187

Durban:
Tel: (031) 571 8839
Fax: (031) 571 8865

Port Elizabeth:
Tel: (041) 398 7082
Fax: (041) 398 7135

Bloemfontein:
Tel: (051) 430 0000
Fax: (051) 430 1144

Intel®, the Intel logo, Centrino and the Centrino logo, Intel Core and Core Inside, are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries.